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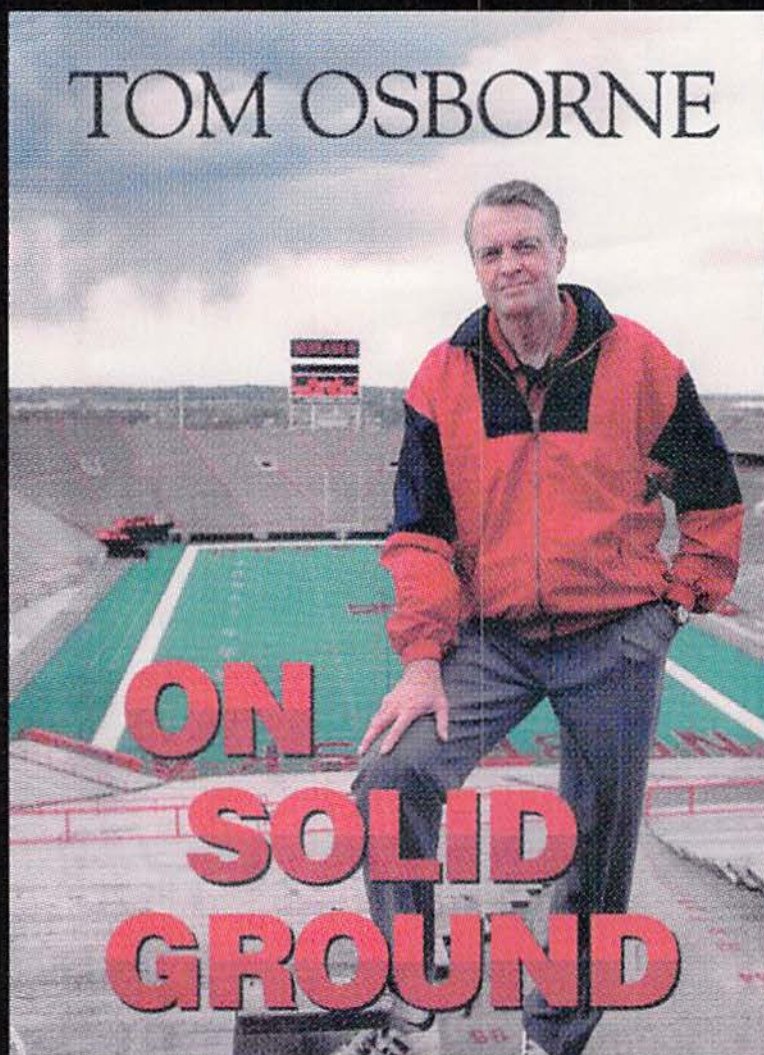
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with Tom Osborne

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C O N T E N T S

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... a subjective word of course. But in Tom Osborne's case, it is easily supported.

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Darin Erstad wasted little time breaking into the Angels' crowded outfield as a rookie.

By Mike Babcock

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With its first preseason ranking adding confidence and plenty of veterans back, the Huskers appear capable of reaching their goal of the NCAA Tournament.

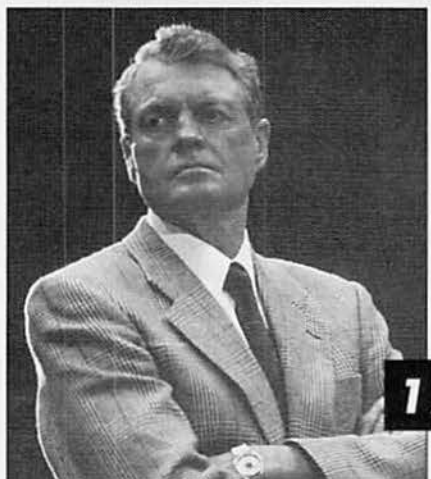
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Now that Terry Pettit has found the promised land (national title), can his team get back minus its three biggest stars?

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Who was the best Husker to ever wear No. 12? How about No. 30? We begin to make our picks in this first of 11-part series.



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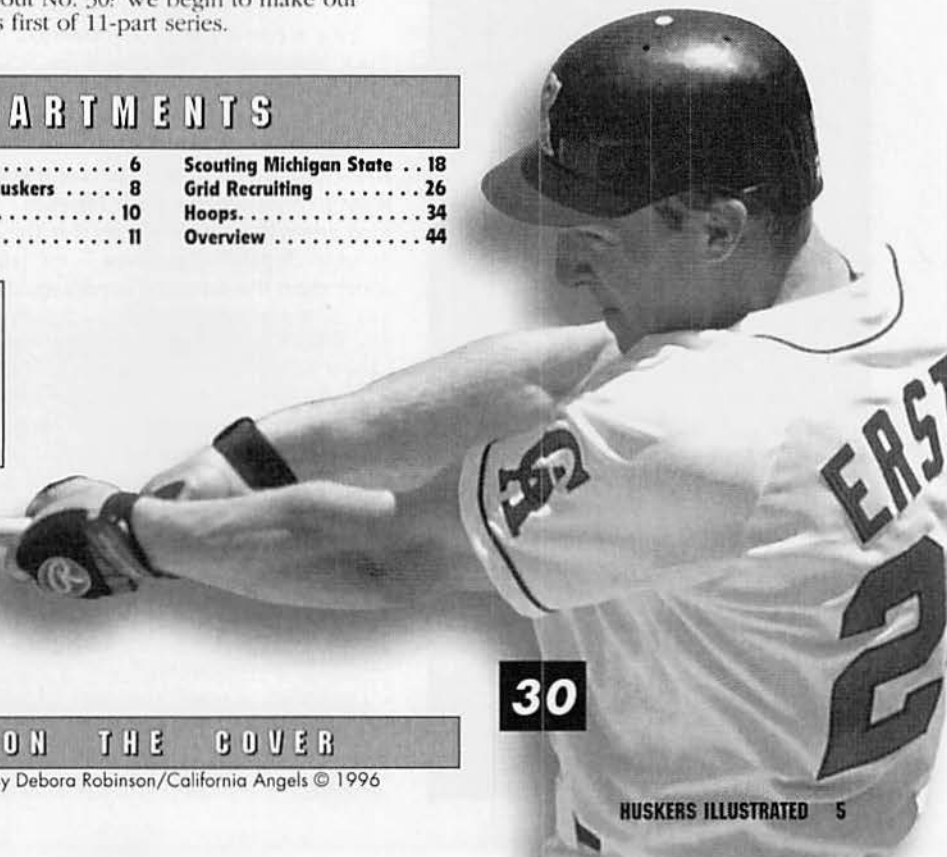
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ON THE COVER

Darin Erstad. By Debora Robinson/California Angels © 1996

fromTheEDITOR

Tom Osborne, the nation's winningest active major college football coach, is once again an author. Osborne's second book, *On Solid Ground*, was released in early August. Indications were, it was destined to be a runaway best-seller in Nebraska, with distribution potential nationally.

Osborne, whose first book *More Than Winning* was published in 1985, said he felt compelled to write *On Solid Ground* not only to set the record straight from his perspective, but also to acknowledge the attitude, commitment and "goal-centeredness" of his last three teams at Nebraska.

The 1994 and 1995 teams won national championships, of course. Even though the 1993 team came up just short of a national title, Osborne said he felt as good about it as he did about the other two.

There is a heavy emphasis in the book on the 1995 season, according to Osborne, who responds to the national criticism of his program. "Obviously, a lot of (negative) things have been said about Nebraska football, especially last season," he said. "Admittedly, I have a biased perspective."

Twenty years from now, when people look back on one of the most successful periods in Cornhusker football history, the book will provide "another source, another point of view," Osborne said.

On Solid Ground includes 266 pages of text and an eight-page insert of color photographs. It was published by the Nebraska Book Publishing Company. Gordon Thiessen, who walked on and earned a letter as a defensive end at Nebraska in 1978, collaborated with Osborne on the book.

"It is not a ghost-written book," said Osborne, who kept notes throughout last season. Osborne's profits from the book will be donated to charities.

Osborne addresses various subjects, from changes in NCAA rules to changes in society. He offers behind-the-scenes insight into several areas, including recruiting.

Osborne, like his predecessor Bob Devaney, has earned a special place in the hearts of Cornhusker fans. And not just because of his winning percentage. There is more substance than that, which is why *On Solid Ground* is such an appropriate title.

LETTERS

I have just completed reading the June/July Preview issue of *Huskies Illustrated* and enjoyed it very much. Especially amusing was the article about Arizona State on page 101 ("Stating Their Case"). Does Steve Bush count as two of Jake

Plummer's favorite targets because of his prolific catching record (1,826 receptions in one season)? Does this include receptions in practice? Plummer's arm must be very sore throwing it that many times. Anyway, he isn't much of a threat if he can't run with the ball after he catches it (241 yards).

I live about 20 miles from ASU and haven't heard local sportscaster raving about Mr. Bush's amazing ability as a receiver.

By the way, I thought your tribute to Brook Berringer was very well done.

Dennis Kudrna
Mesa, Ariz.

You want a job as a proofreader? Bush has caught 241 passes for 1,826 yards. — Editor

Another solid job from *Huskies Illustrated*. Your preview is the best source of information for Husker fans anywhere. Every year it is the most in-depth breakdown I can find other than the school's media guide.

Darin Erstad's parents apparently will have to use their plane tickets for a trip to Vancouver, B.C., after all. On August 2, just before this issue of *Huskies Illustrated* went to press, Erstad was sent back to the minor leagues so that he could play every day. California plans to recall him in September, when major league rosters will be expanded.

In 41 games with the Angels, Erstad batted .275 with three home runs, 17 RBI and 21 strike outs in 160 at-bats.

Strangely, the same day Erstad was sent down, the Angels called up outfielder Orlando Palmeiro from the minors. Palmeiro had only a .273 batting average in 27 games in the bigs this year.

Less than a week after Erstad's temporary demotion, the Angels dropped into last place in their division and manager Rene Lachemann resigned. ■

The Big 12 section was also a nice touch. I dug that you profiled all the teams in the new conference and not just Nebraska's opponents. As someone who hasn't followed much Southwest Conference action, this was a great introduction to the Texas schools.

Chris Powell
Ogden, Utah

Nebraska No. 1 again. I'm all over that prediction. Last year my friends called you a homer magazine for picking the Huskers to win it all. Now they are giving you the benefit of the doubt.

Casey Brachman
Lancaster, Pa.

Here's hoping that as the Huskers go for "Chapter Three" that they keep writing more to the book.

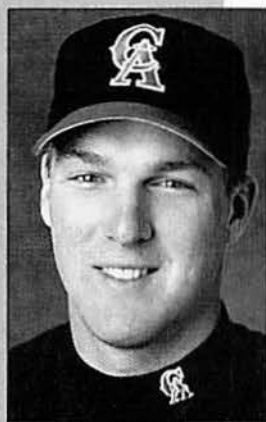
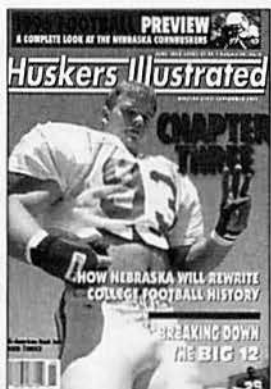
Howard Campbell
Houston, Texas

I think Mike Babcock was right on in his assessment that this could be Nebraska's best defensive unit in 20 years ("State of the Huskers"). I found myself watching the Black Shirts more than the offense last season, and they are incredibly good. Opponents better stop worrying about how many points we put on the board and think about how many of theirs we keep off.

Paul Grammar
Omaha, Neb.

Please send your comments and questions to **Letters**, P.O. Box 83222, Lincoln, Neb. 68501. Or fax them to us at (214) 851-1720. We reserve the right to edit the letters for clarity, content and length.

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Old Reliable

As the face of college football and the conferences which play inside its boundaries have changed, Nebraska has been able to stay consistently on top over the last three decades

The Big Eight Conference is a memory, forced into history by economic necessity. In its place is the Big 12, which will begin its first season in Manhattan, Kan., and Austin, Texas, on Aug. 31.

Already, the Big 12 is the nation's premier conference. Some NFL teams might be hard-pressed to win its championship — the Arizona Cardinals and Baltimore Ravens, to name two.

**By
MIKE
BABCOCK**



consecutive seasons. They have played in 27 consecutive bowl games, the last 15 of which would be designated "major." And they have won four national titles, including the last two.

Nebraska football has never been more successful. In the 21st Century, this will be remembered as a Golden Era. And Osborne, hand-picked by Hall of Famer Devaney, will be remembered as one of college football's greatest coaches, a status he already has achieved. He is a legend in his time.

Future generations of Cornhusker

have been in such a position since the *Associated Press* established its national rankings in 1936. Their names should be familiar. In addition to Devaney, they include: Bear Bryant, Bud Wilkinson, Bernie Bierman, "Red" Blaik, Frank Leahy and Barry Switzer. Bryant coached Alabama into a position to win a third straight national title twice. Put another way, since 1936 there have been just eight seasons like the one we are about to begin.

To digress a moment, some would say there have been just seven. The uncertainty involves the 1947 season and whether or not Notre Dame (coached by Leahy) was

Bob Berry

The Big 12 is evidence of a rapid change in major college athletics, brought about by television dollars and driven by not only profit motives but also gender equity mandates. It follows the Big Eight, which followed the Big Seven, which followed the Big Six, which followed the Missouri Valley Intercollegiate Athletic Association (the official name of the conference into the mid-1960s).

Lest we forget, nothing lasts forever. Organizations become obsolete.

The new conference, created from the former Big Eight and four Southwest Conference schools, is no more immune to change than its predecessors. In fact, it probably won't last in its initial form beyond the turn of the century because the forces that have shaped it are accelerating change.

Change is inevitable, which underscores the unchanging success Nebraska football has enjoyed the past three decades, beginning with Bob Devaney and continuing under Tom Osborne.

The Cornhuskers have won consistently since Devaney arrived from Wyoming in 1962. And that consistency has been remarkable beginning with the 1969 season. They have won nine or more games in 27



Even as parity has become more rampant in college football, Nebraska has been able to stand out winning two-straight national titles and getting the chance for a third.

fans will look back and envy us this opportunity to watch as Osborne attempts to coach Nebraska to an unprecedented third consecutive national championship.

He is in select company on that count. Only seven other coaches

the national champion.

The Fighting Irish, national champions in 1946, completed in undefeated and untied 1947 season by overwhelming Southern California 38-7 at the Los Angeles Coliseum on Dec. 6. The Irish were ranked No. 1 in the final AP poll, conducted (as always back then) before bowl games. The week after Michigan defeated Southern California in the Rose Bowl game 49-0, however, a special AP poll was conducted, with

the 10-0 Wolverines at the top and Notre Dame, which didn't play in a bowl game, second.

According to the NCAA record book, the special poll didn't nullify Notre Dame's national championship in 1947, giving the Fighting Irish two in a row. On the other hand, if Michigan were to be considered the national champion in 1947, then it would have won back-to-back national championships because the Wolverines were undefeated and untied and atop the AP poll in 1948.

Neither Michigan or Notre Dame won back-to-back titles from 1946 to 1948. So the total is eight, regardless of what you read or hear. The point is, such an accomplishment is rare.

I mention this, at the risk of seeming repetitive, as one more reminder of how remarkable Nebraska's last three football seasons have been. The Cornhuskers have won 36 of 37 games in those seasons — no other major college program has produced as many victories during a three-year period. And they have played for the national championship in three consecutive bowl games, winning the last two.

You are aware of these things, of course. But it is easy to ignore their significance.

There was slightly less excitement about Nebraska's 1995 national championship than there was about the first in 1994. That's understandable enough. The first represented a new experience. It did not make winning the second title any easier, however, even though that might have been the perception.

Earning a national championship is extremely difficult, requiring a lot of talent and a little luck. Yet Cornhusker fans have been blessed twice in two seasons. Nebraska has won back-to-back titles at a time when the chances of repeating have been diminished dramatically by changes in NCAA rules.

The Cornhuskers are in a rare position as they prepare for the season-opener against Michigan State on Sept. 7 at Memorial Stadium. They have a chance to win three championships in a row.

We should appreciate the opportunity to share in the experience, regardless of the outcome. As Osborne often has pointed out, we should not be so focused on the destination that we forget to enjoy the journey. We will be confronted by greatness this season, as we have been the last three. ■

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Penny
Heyns
Struck Gold
Twice At
The 1996
Olympic
Games**
• Mike Friend



Tom Tidball

University of Nebraska athletes weren't the only ones getting a huge kick out of their own success at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta.

Nebraska coaches were having some fun too.

"This is the kind of job where you better have a pretty good flame going all the time anyway, but this has been great," said Nebraska men's and women's swim coach Cal Bentz. "These Summer Games will help us get a good start this year. I don't know what it's ultimately going to take to get people to come out and watch swim meets, but I know that Olympic Games like these seem to help."

Bentz, along with several other Nebraska coaches, watched future, current and former

Husker athletes produce solid results, and haul home some medals from the Games.

In all, there were 13 athletes with Nebraska ties competing in four different sports, representing 10 differ-

ent countries.

Penny Heyns, a 1996 NU graduate swimming for her home country of South Africa, won two gold medals at the Georgia Tech Aquatic Center. Heyns was the first South African to win more than one gold medal in a single Olympic competition.

Heyns, 21, held off 14-year-old American upstart Amanda Beard in both the 100 and 200 meter breaststroke events, to become the most decorated Husker.

In the preliminaries, Heyns set an Olympic record in the 200, then, went out and set another one in a head-to-head match with the young Californian. Heyns' gold medal-winning time was 2:25.41. Beard's time was 2:25.75.

Beard came into the Games ranked No. 1 in the world, with Heyns right behind her at No. 2.

Swimmers with NU ties joining Heyns at the Atlanta Games were: Roberto Bonilla of Guatemala in the 200 breaststroke; Juan Benavides of Spain in the 50 and 100 meter freestyles; Julia Russell in the 100 and 200 meter breaststroke; and Helene Muller in the 50, 100, and 200 meter freestyle events. Russell and

Muller are both from South Africa. Muller will be a freshman at Nebraska this fall.

Also, Panamanian Jose Isaza, who spent a semester in Lincoln, competed in the 200 meter breaststroke.

Nebraskans had plenty to watch in track as well, thanks to former sprinter Merlene Ottey. Ottey burst to a silver medal performance in the 100 meter dash, just behind the United States' Gail Devers and just ahead of American Gwen Torrance.

Joining Ottey, who also won a silver in the 200 and a bronze as a member of 400 meter relay team, in the track

competition were former Huskers Ximena Restredo of Columbia in the 400 meter and the 1600 relay, Nicola Martial of Guyana in the triple jump and Frank Mensah in the men's 110 meter hurdles.

Jamaica's Balazs Toleyesi competed in the 1500 meter and American Linetta Wilson ran in the preliminaries and semifinals for the women's gold medal winning 1600 meter relay team.

Add to these performances, the play of Canada's Lori Sippel in softball (gold medal) and America's Lori Endicott in volleyball, and the Huskers virtually filled the Olympic platter for Nebraska fans. ■

HUSKER SWIMMING FINISHES 1996 OLYMPICS

Current Huskers

Julia Russell

200-meter individual medley (26th): 2:20.40
100-meter breaststroke (17th): 1:10.87
200-meter breaststroke (12th): 2:30.38

Juan Benavides

50-meter freestyle (30th): 23.36
100-meter freestyle (33rd): 51.20

Former Huskers

Penny Heyns

100-meter breaststroke (1st): 1:07.73
200-meter breaststroke (1st): 2:25.41

Roberto Bonilla

200-meter breaststroke (30th): 2:21.86

Jose Isaza

100-meter freestyle (43rd): 51.86

**ALL
SPORTS**

All the Wright Moves



Former Cornhusker strong safety Toby Wright is on the verge of stardom in the National Football League, according to *Sports Illustrated's* Peter King. Wright, in his third professional season with the St. Louis Rams, is included on King's "All Breakout Team" in *Sports Illustrated Presents Pro Football '96*. King writes of his selections of the league's top emerging players: "In the new NFL economy, young players now get an earlier shot at stardom. Here's the best of this year's bunch."

Wright was a second-round pick of the Rams in the 1994 NFL draft, after earning second-team All-Big Eight recognition from the conference coaches as a senior strong safety. He was the second of five Cornhuskers chosen in the draft, following Trev Alberts, a first-round pick.

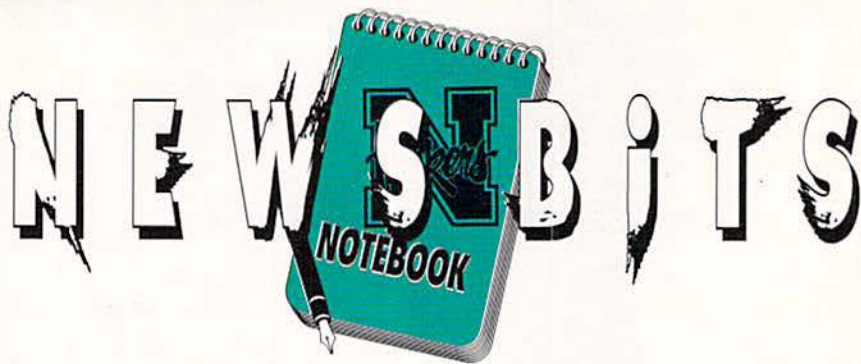
Wright, who transferred to Nebraska from Phoenix College in 1992, finished his college career impressively, making eight tackles in the 1994 Orange Bowl loss to Florida State. Wright not only led the Rams in tackles last season but also intercepted six passes and deflected 12. ■

The Devaney Era has ended. And so has the era of broadcasts of Cornhusker football and basketball games by KFAB radio, which was associated with Nebraska athletics for 70 years.

Great Plains Media, Inc., of Elkhorn, Neb., won the winning bid for Cornhusker broadcast rights, offering \$8.6 million for five years. Warren Swain was hired to do play-by-play for football and men's basketball.

Swain replaces KFAB's Kent Pavelka, who did Cornhuskers football play-by-play for the past 13 years and basketball play-by-play for 18 of the past 21 years.

The football broadcast team will include Adrian Fiala as color commentator. Fiala earned letters as a linebacker on the 1967, 1968 and 1969 Cornhusker football teams. ■



What About Bob?

For 34 years, Bob Devaney was a familiar figure around the Nebraska athletic department offices. Even after suffering a mild stroke in March of 1995, he continued to make regular, though brief, appearances at the South Stadium, where he maintained his office as Athletic Director Emeritus.

Anyone who wanted to could stop by and say hello to the Hall of Fame coach.

That opportunity no longer exists following Devaney's retirement, which became official on June 30. "I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at Nebraska, and I hope to still be able to assist the athletic department in any way I can," Devaney said in a release prepared by the sports information office.

"I have never looked at coaching or athletic administration as a job," the release continued. "It has always been a lot of fun for me, and that's why I never really wanted to retire."

The time had come, however, for the 81-year-old legend.

Devaney was Nebraska's head football coach from 1962 to 1972, compiling a record of 101-20-2 and directing the Cornhuskers to national championships in 1970 and 1971.

His 1971 team ranks among the best in college football history.

He served as athletic director from 1967 to 1993, when he became Athletic Director Emeritus.

"When I first came here, I said it was my job to follow Bob Devaney — because no one can ever replace him. And that is as true today as it was then," said Bill Byrne, his successor.

Devaney's decision to retire was based on an interest in spending more time with his wife of 60 years, Phyllis, as well as daughter Pat, son Mike and grandchildren Kindra and Rob Devaney.

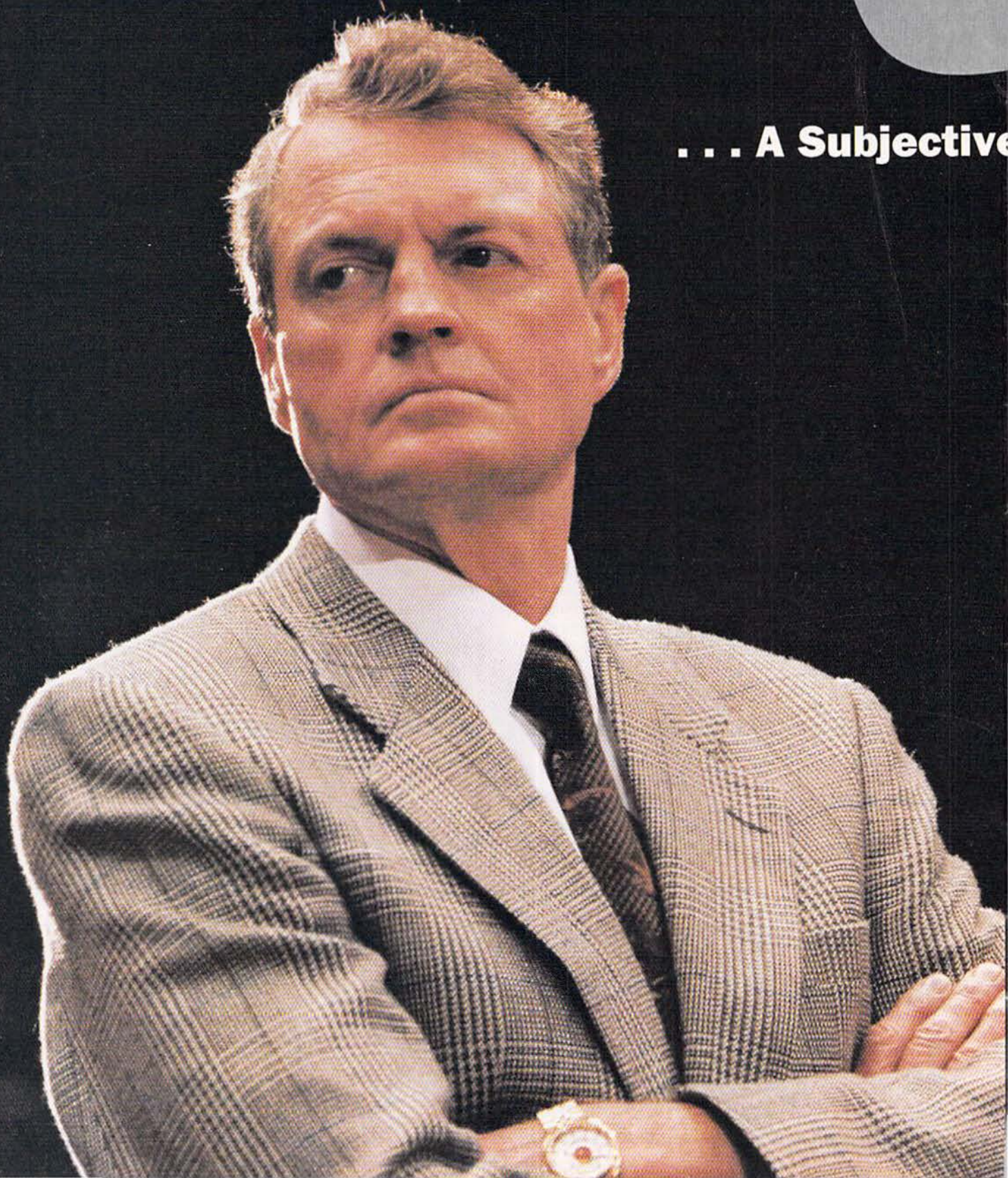
Bob and Phyllis moved from the house in which they had lived since coming to Nebraska in 1962 to a retirement home in Lincoln at the time of his retirement. They have planned an auction of various items from Bob's coaching career for the early fall, with proceeds going to charity. Pat Devaney is coordinating the auction, which will be conducted by Omaha-based Casey's Sports Cards & Collectibles. ■



VOICE CHANGE

G

... A Subjective



THE GREAT

Word Of Course.

But In Tom Osborne's Case, It Is Easily Supported

After practice one afternoon a few seasons ago, Tom Osborne was asked if he was frustrated by not having coached Nebraska to the national championship. Osborne, who had grown weary of answering that particular question, responded as he always did. No, he said, because winning a national championship wasn't what motivated him. He was not like Captain Ahab chasing the Great White Whale.

Osborne's allusion to Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* became a familiar story during the time the Cornhuskers lost seven consecutive bowl games. It came to symbolize the frustration which he maintained he didn't feel but that skeptics constantly attributed to him. The situations were comparable, they claimed: Osborne was exactly like Ahab in his pursuit of the elusive national title, *Moby Dick*.

The question is no longer asked in the wake of back-to-back national championships. And the truth of what Osborne told reporters that day after practice has been confirmed. If winning a national championship had been his goal, achieving it might have changed him. And it hasn't.

That's what those who know him best say, anyway. Mike Osborne considered the matter. No, his dad hasn't changed, he said, adding with a laugh: "He's just as rotten now as he was before."

Nebraska Athletic Director Bill Byrne, Osborne's boss, offered a similar tongue-in-cheek estimation of how the Cornhusker head coach of 23 years has been affected by his recent success. "Other than the Rolls Royce he drives and the fact that he dresses in a tuxedo and you have to kiss his championship rings, he hasn't changed a bit . . . seriously, Tom's the same great guy to work with," said Byrne.

Osborne, the winningest active football coach in Division I of the NCAA, hasn't slacked off a bit. He still arrives at his South Stadium office early and leaves it late. He is still as concerned about Missouri as he is about Colorado and Kansas State. And he has no plans to retire in the immediate future.

Had winning the national championship been his goal, he might well have considered retiring. But "I'm not any closer to quitting now than I was five years ago,"

he said at the Big 12 media gathering in St. Louis in late July. "I feel good, health wise, and I'm having fun doing it. So I'll keep on going."

Winning the championships has made coaching more fun, of course, because it has alleviated the pressure imposed on him by others. "He would probably never say it, but I think it's a big weight off his shoulders, not internal pressure but the external pressure," Mike Osborne said. "He had been close a few times but some people said he could never win the 'big one.' And the 'big one' changed.

"First, it was Oklahoma. Then it was Colorado. Then the only big one was if he won them all. He might not talk about it (the pressure). But it was forced on him. Now, there will be other things."

Other things such as what happened last season with Lawrence Phillips. Osborne was criticized not only by the national media, which he has come to expect, but also by a few Nebraskans for his handling of the situation. Last season should have been Osborne's most enjoyable. Not only did the Cornhuskers successfully defend their 1994 national championship, they did it convincingly. After they embarrassed second-ranked Florida in the Fiesta Bowl, 62-24, there could be no doubt they were the best.

Throughout the perfect season, however, Osborne was forced to justify his decisions regarding Phillips. His motives for reinstating the junior I-back were continually questioned.

Appearances to the contrary, Osborne took the criticism to heart, according to his son. "Did he grow a thick skin? Anyone who pretends to have a thick skin has to be crazy; there's something mentally wrong with them," said Mike Osborne. "He's not some joker who's going to take the easy way out."

"He knew he was going to be criticized for what he did, but it's still obviously unpleasant when you are. He put so much time and thought into it (the Phillips situation) . . . it hurts."

Steve Pederson, the associate athletic director for football operations, concurs. "Tom doesn't let on to that, and he'd probably never admit it. But I don't care who you are, the criticism begins to wear on you," said Pederson. "You can say you're going to ignore it, but that's easier

said than done."

"Tom is a very sensitive person. I don't see any shell there. When you keep getting pounded on, there are bruises; you get hurt. But he still loves his players, cares for them," Byrne said.

Among the qualities that make Osborne a great coach is his ability to keep personal concerns, and hurts, secondary to team considerations. Even at the most difficult times, he never lost focus, said Pederson. "Tom didn't let it carry over. It wasn't: 'We're going to show those guys.'"

Besides having the best winning percentage (.827) among active NCAA-Division I-A football coaches and winning back-to-back national championships, he has produced more victories during a three-season period than any coach in history — Nebraska's record since 1993 is 36-1.

Osborne was the third-youngest major college coach to reach 200 victories. His 200th came at age 56. The legendary Pop Warner earned victory No. 200 at age 50. Vince Dooley is second on the list, also reaching 200 at age 56. There is a 140-day difference in Dooley's and Osborne's birth dates.

Osborne won't get to 300 coaching victories quicker than Warner. But there's a good chance he'll reach 300 quicker than anyone else. Bear Bryant currently is No. 2, at 67 years and 22 months.

Such an assertion is based on the assumptions that not only will Osborne continue coaching but that he also will continue to be successful. The latter is as reasonable as the

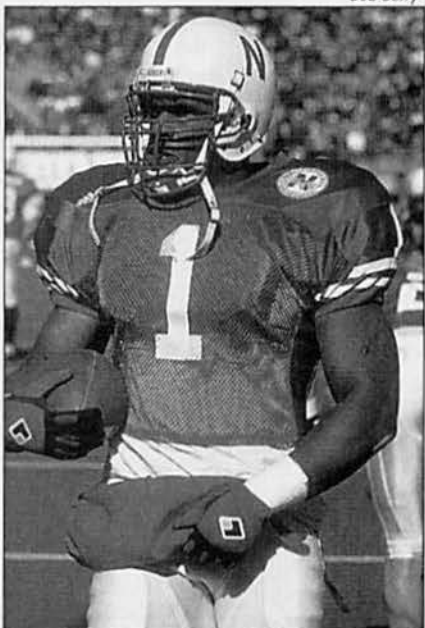
Bob Berry

former. "Tom is a fiery competitor," said Byrne. "I don't expect that to change (just because of the two national championships)."

Prior to Nebraska's current 25-game winning streak, which has given the Cornhuskers the opportunity to win an unprecedented third consecutive national championship, Osborne's run-oriented option offense was considered by some to be too conservative. Now, it's regarded as state-of-the-art.

"We're probably running most of the same plays we ran three years ago," said Pederson. "Back then,

Bob Berry



Osborne seemed to put aside the pressures brought about last year by the off-field problems of Lawrence Phillips (above) and others following the death of Brook Berringer.

people said they didn't work. Tom's not coaching any differently, but now, he's a genius."

In the midst of the bowl losing streak, there were suggestions that Osborne hadn't kept up with the times. "Maybe inside Nebraska there was some talk like that. But outside Nebraska, it wasn't that way. I said when I came here Tom was one of the reasons," Byrne said. "I don't think people realize how modern and up-to-date our offensive and defensive structures are. I really appreciate that about Tom."

"Conservative? The NCAA has changed more rules to stop Nebraska from being innovative than any other school. You certainly don't think Tom is conservative (on offense) when you see Will Shields running down the sideline on the fumblerooskie. I don't think that's true at all."

Byrne was referring to one of Osborne's trick plays, on which the center sets the ball on the ground after touching the quarterback's hands, then a guard picks it up and runs with it.

Osborne is as adept at handling his players as he is at devising his offense, which is another significant factor in his success, according to Pederson, who also has worked in administrative positions in the football programs at Ohio State and Tennessee after a stint as Nebraska's recruiting coordinator.

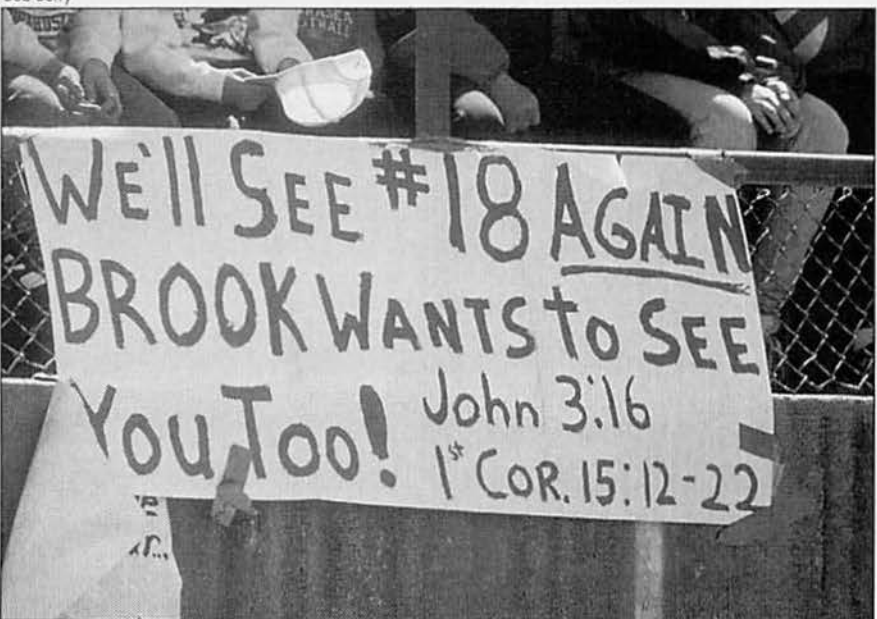
"Maybe 20 years ago, Tom was at the head of the country in the way he dealt with his players. He didn't rant and rave then, and he doesn't now," Pederson said. "He treats his players as adults."

And as the Phillips affair underscored in dramatic fashion, Osborne gives his players the benefit of the doubt, standing behind them even though expediency might dictate otherwise.

In July, Osborne announced his intention to prohibit National Football League scouts from coming on campus during the 1996 season. Among the reasons for the prohibition, he said in a release through the sports information office, was "the manner in which the Christian Peter situation was handled."

Peter was selected in the NFL draft by the New England Patriots then released.

His dad seemed to set aside the pressures brought about by the off-field problems of Phillips and others following the death of Brook Berringer in the crash of a small



plane, Mike Osborne said.

Berringer's death had a profound effect on his dad, as it did on everyone associated with Nebraska athletics. "We all loved Brook," Mike said. It helped put things in perspective. "I haven't really talked to him (his dad) about it, but I think he kind of shut the door on all that other stuff

"The biggest disagreement Tom and I have is, he doesn't want as big of a raise as I'd like to give him."

— AD Bill Byrne

then."

Osborne is approaching his 24th season with as much energy and focus as every other, his son said. "It's kind of like autopilot . . . well, that makes it sound like they're not thinking about what they're doing, and they are. I think it's the same as it was six or seven years ago, but with (the addition of) the unity council and some changes in the methods of training. Plus, they've had some good recruiting classes."

Osborne and his assistants "aren't slowing down at all. It's so ingrained in them," Mike said. "I can't imagine any program working any harder."

Osborne is no different than he was when Byrne replaced Bob Devaney as athletic director in June of 1992. That's according to Byrne, anyway. "The biggest disagreement Tom and I have is, he doesn't want as big of a raise as I'd like to give him. He wants his assistants to be taken care of. That's smart."

The bottom line is, Osborne is a bargain in today's college coaching market.

"We rolled over his contract," Byrne said, pointing out the obvious with a bit of humor.

That pretty much says it all. ■

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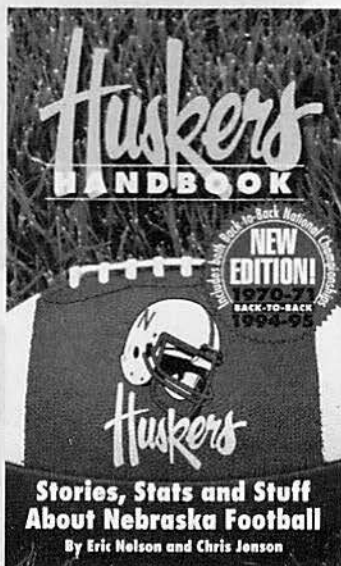
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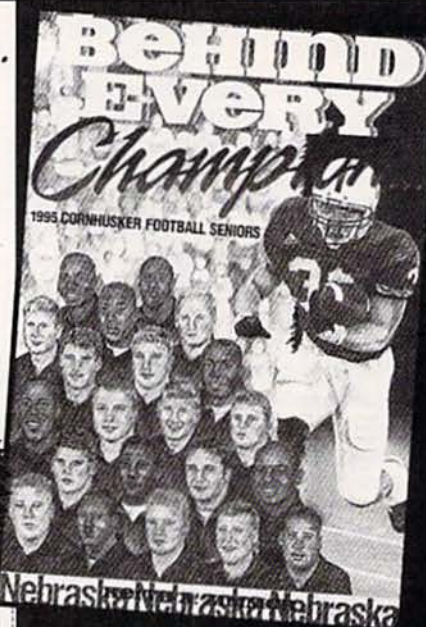
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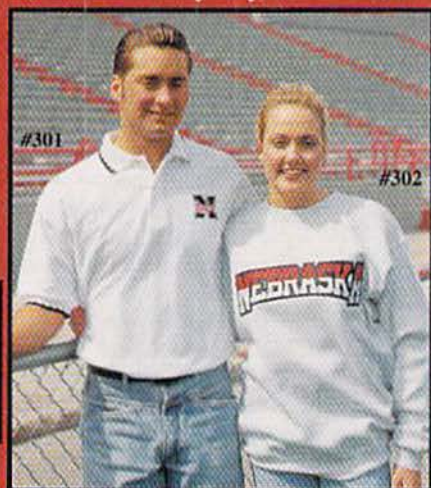


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SCOUTING



By Mark Derowitsch

It's not like Michigan State had a terrible defense last year. The Spartans held five of their opponents to 21 points or fewer and helped the team earn a bowl bid under first-year coach Nick Saban.

But the Spartans also gave up points by the bunches. In fact, Nebraska, Wisconsin and Louisiana State all scored at least 45 points against Michigan State.

The Spartans had the ability to give up touchdowns in a relative short span of time.

In their season-opening game against Nebraska a year ago, the Spartans allowed three plays of more than 50 yards by the Huskers.

The Spartans can't afford to do that again this year to any team, let alone Nebraska.

"We have to give up fewer big plays," Saban said. "Doing that depends on three things: first, we have to do a better job stopping the run; second, we have to be fundamentally better at tackling; and third, we have to play the ball better in the deep part of the field."

No matter what Nebraska throws at them, Saban believes the Spartans will bring a better defensive unit into the contest.

"We have more experienced returning players, more confidence and more maturity on the defensive side of the ball," Saban said. "I'm very pleased with that. ... We have to be better on

defense, and I think we will be."

Part of Saban's optimism is because of middle linebacker Reggie Garnett, a 6-foot-1, 230-pound senior who is already being mentioned as a possible Butkus Award candidate.

Garnett, who has started his previous three seasons at Michigan State, earned honorable mention All-Big Ten a year ago after posting a career-high 111 tackles. Against rival Michigan, Garnett made 12 stops, including nine solo tackles, in the 28-25 Spartan victory.

But Garnett is just one of seven starters who return from the Michigan State team that finished 6-5-1 last season, including a 45-26



Derrick Mason proved he was a big-play receiver after making 53 receptions for 787 yards and four scores.

PRESS PICKS

• **Mike Babcock**, Huskers Illustrated: No disrespect toward Michigan State intended, if for no other reason than Bob Devaney began his Hall of Fame college coaching career there. But the Spartans have a new quarterback and the remnants of a defense that ranked last in the Big Ten against the run in 1995. On the plus side, they will have played a game (against Purdue on Aug. 31) and gained valuable experience.

Nebraska 45, Michigan State 10.

• **Brad Rosenthal**, York News-Times (Neb.): The atmosphere at Memorial Stadium will be enough in itself to lift NU to a victory. Not only will the Huskers begin their defense of another national title, but NU will be opening at home for the first time in three years.

Nebraska 31, Michigan State 7.

• **Larry Puntney**, KLNK-TV: If the Spring Game is any indication, Michigan State may not score at all. The game could be close at the half, but expect the Husker "O" to roll in the second half.

Nebraska 41, Michigan State 10.

• **Doug Looney**, College football freelance writer: Poor Michigan State. What they will do for money. This is maybe a speed bump for Nebraska. Michigan State aspires to play with the likes of the Cornhuskers, but they will realize they can't. The only concern is if Nebraska can solve the quarterback situation by the first game.

Nebraska 35, Michigan State 6.

• **Steve Grinczel**, Booth Newspapers, (East Lansing, Mich.): Michigan State will be improved defensively so it won't be 50 points like last year. The Spartan offense will take time finding itself, so they will have to just settle for the four field goals.

Nebraska 35, Michigan State 12.

loss to Louisiana State in the Independence Bowl.

Ike Reese will lineup along side of Garnett from his spot at right outside line-backer, a spot the junior has held since his freshman year. Reese made 76 tackles and recovered a team-high three fumbles as a sophomore.

Up front, the Spartans are very experienced on the right side of the line, but have little returning depth to the left. Right end Jabbar Threats and right tackle Chris Smith return to claim their starting jobs. Last year, Smith recorded 62 tackles and five sacks. Threats was in on 16 tackles for loss (a team high) and also had five sacks.

Sophomore Tim Laws, a transfer from Michigan, won the starting job at the left end spot.

The secondary is perhaps the most experienced area for Michigan State. Three starters — safeties Marvin Wright and Sorie Kanu and cornerback Ray Hill — return to a unit that ranked sixth in the conference against the pass.

Wright made 104 tackles, forced three fumbles, broke up six passes and picked off one as a junior a year ago, while Kanu picked off two passes even though he started the final five games of the year. Hill broke up a team-high eight passes.

Sophomore Amp Campbell is likely to start opposite Hill at cornerback.

Offensively, the Spartans return six starters, but must replace quar-



Kevin W. Fowler / CMSU Sports Information

An impact player since his freshman year, linebacker Reggie Garnett enters 1996 with 272 career tackles.

terback Tony Banks, who started each of the past two seasons and threw for more than 4,000 yards during his brief career.

The leading candidate to replace Banks is junior Todd Schultz, who started three games when Banks went down with an injury a year ago. He completed 52-of-83 passes for 570 yards and two touchdowns, but he also threw six interceptions in a limited role.

Saban has confidence that Schultz will do the job this fall.

The Spartans will have talent to run the ball, and depth won't be a problem. Junior tailback Marc

Renaud returns to his starting spot, and all he did as a sophomore was rush for 1,057 yards to become the third player in Michigan State history to topple the 1,000-yard barrier as a sophomore (joining Tico Duckett and Lorenzo White).

Renaud had knee surgery in the spring and may not be ready to face the Huskers.

Junior Travis Reece will start at fullback after rushing for 33 yards in a limited role as a sophomore.

Senior Derrick Mason proved he was a big-play receiver a year ago. He made 53 receptions for 787 yards and four touchdowns last season. Mason is also a dangerous kick returner, averaging 26.3 yards per return a year ago. Senior Nigea Carter, after catching 20 passes for 283 yards and two touchdowns a year ago, will start at flanker. John Keur is the Spartans' top tight end.

Leading the way for the offensive line will be right tackle Flozell Adams, a 6-7, 325-pound junior. Adams started 11 games last season and is considered one of the top linemen in the Big Ten.

Adams anchors the right side of the line. Guard Brian Mosallam and center Matt Beard both return to their starting posts. Juniors Scott Shaw and Dave Mudge are expected to start at the left guard and tackle spots, respectively.

Chris Gardner, who made 12 of 16 field goal attempts a year ago, returns to handle the placekicking chores. Roger Fleenor, who transferred from Pacific after that school dropped its football program, will be the Spartans' top punter. ■

NEBRASKA vs. MICHIGAN STATE TWO-DEEPS

HUSKER OFFENSE

SE	5	Brendan Holbein	5-9	190	Sr
	89	Jeff Lake	6-4	205	Jr
LT	77	Adam Treu	6-6	300	Sr
	73	Fred Pollack	6-4	305	Jr
LG	75	Chris Dishman	6-3	310	Sr
	62	Matt Hoskinson	6-1	280	So
C	67	Aaron Taylor	6-1	305	Jr
	59	Josh Heskey	6-3	280	Jr
RG	64	Jon Zatechka	6-2	290	Jr
	71	Mike Van Cleave	6-2	285	Jr
RT	70	Eric Anderson	6-4	300	Jr
	78	Kory Mikos	6-5	295	Sr
TE	90	Tim Carpenter	6-3	250	Jr
	88	Sheldon Jackson	6-4	250	So
QB	7	Scott Frost	6-3	215	Jr
	11	Matt Turman	5-11	185	Sr
FB	28	Brian Schuster	5-11	225	Sr
	45	Joel Makovicka	5-11	230	So
IB	30	Ahman Green	6-0	210	So
	21	Damon Benning	5-11	210	Sr
WB	25	Jon Vedral	5-11	205	Sr
	29	Shevin Wiggins	5-11	180	So
PK	35	Kris Brown	5-10	200	Sr

SPARTAN DEFENSE

LE	23	Tim Laws	6-4	242	So
	99	Dimitrios Underwood	6-7	250	So
LT	62	Robert Newkirk	6-3	285	Fr
	95	Davarrio Carter	6-2	276	Fr
RT	96	Chris Smith	6-1	268	Sr
	82	Delrico Simons	6-3	275	Sr
RE	94	Jabbar Threats	6-5	255	Sr
	93	Matt Laurino	6-5	260	Fr
LLB	53	Courtney Ledyard	6-2	237	So
		Dwayne Hawkins	6-3	230	So
MLB	22	Reggie Garnett	6-1	230	Sr
	37	Tyrone Garland	5-11	230	Jr
RLB	44	Ike Reese	6-3	220	Jr
	38	Sean Banks	6-2	205	Fr
LC	3	Amp Campbell	6-0	183	So
	36	Aldi Henry	5-9	181	Sr
RC	19	Ray Hill	6-0	180	Jr
LS	18	Marvin Wright	6-1	205	Sr
	29	Lemar Marshall	6-2	203	So
RS	6	Sorie Kanu	5-11	193	So
	28	Dan Hackenbracht	6-2	188	Jr
P	15	Roger Fleenor	6-1	175	Jr

SPARTAN OFFENSE

WR	80	Derrick Mason	5-10	191	Sr
	20	Octavis Long	5-10	178	Jr
LT	64	Casey Jensen	6-7	291	Fr
	65	Dave Mudge	6-7	289	Jr
LG	65	Dave Mudge	6-7	289	Jr
	73	Scott Shaw	6-4	295	Jr
C	73	Scott Shaw	6-4	295	Jr
	79	Jason Strayhorn	6-2	280	So
RG	63	Brian Mosallam	6-1	274	Sr
	72	Don Walker	6-2	320	Jr
RT	76	Flozell Adams	6-7	325	Jr
	75	Shane Adkins	6-6	264	Fr
WR	81	Nigea Carter	6-2	181	Sr
	4	Damien Hiram	6-05	219	Jr
TE	83	Josh Keur	6-5	260	Jr
	87	Marcus Chapman	6-5	251	So
QB	9	Todd Schultz	6-4	217	Jr
	11	Gus Ornstein	6-5	210	So
FB	41	Travis Reece	6-3	240	Jr
	45	Garett Gould	6-2	230	So
TB	26	Marc Renaud	5-10	190	Jr
	27	Duane Goulbourne	5-9	200	Sr
PK	14	Chris Gardner	5-9	191	Jr

HUSKER DEFENSE

LRH	93	Jared Tomich	6-2	260	Sr
	57	Chad Kelsay	6-3	300	So
DT	97	Jeff Ogard	6-6	330	Sr
	99	Jason Wiltz	6-3	295	So
DT	95	Jason Peter	6-4	285	Jr
	74	Scott Saltsman	6-2	270	Sr
RRH	98	Grant Wistrom	6-5	250	Jr
	84	Mike Rucker	6-6	250	So
SLB	28	Jamel Williams	6-2	205	Sr
	81	Larry Arnold	6-4	240	Sr
MLB	44	Jon Hesse	6-4	250	Sr
	56	Jay Foreman	6-1	225	So
WLB	43	Terrell Farley	6-1	205	Sr
	91	Ryan Terwilliger	6-5	225	Sr
LC	20	Michael Booker	6-2	205	Sr
	2	Leslie Dennis	5-8	185	Jr
RC	12	Mike Fullman	5-7	170	Sr
	26	Jerome Peterson	5-7	185	Fr
ROV	4	Octavious McFarlin	5-11	190	Jr
	10	Mike Minter	5-10	190	Sr
FS	16	Eric Stokes	5-11	185	Sr
	3	Eric Warfield	6-1	195	Jr
P	19	Jesse Kosch	6-0	185	Jr

Depth charts were compiled August 5, 1996 and may change before game time. # = duplicate number * = injured, but probable for game

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- Glass, dust cover, hanger. • Matted in school colors.
- Engraved name plate • Customized upon request.

COLLECTIBLES

Huskers

Back to Back Full Leather Jacket

Show your support for the Back to Back champions with this incredible premier edition full leather championship jacket. Each jacket is individually hand made with the finest leather and includes a premier edition gold seal on the inside. Features an intricately detailed, raised leather Back to Back Championship design. Made by the Jeff Hamilton Leather Company, these limited edition items come in either red or black.

Please specify size and color when ordering.

\$1389.99 ea.

(Full Leather Red Jacket) Item # **NECOF20163**
(Full Leather Black Jacket) Item # **NECOF20307**

Also Available:

\$598.95 ea.

Wool/Leather Red Jacket

Item # **NECOF20166**

Wool/Leather Black Jacket

Item # **NECOF20308**

*Adult Sizes: S, M, L, XL, XXL and XXXL or send us your measurements and we will custom order your dimensions. (No refunds or exchanges unless due to manufacturer defect.) Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.



1995 National Championship 24 Karat Gold Coin

Commemorate the 1995 National Champions with this beautiful Huskers gold coin. Individually numbered, this coin is made of one ounce, .999% pure silver and is overlaid in 24 karat gold. Limited to an edition of 1,995. Each comes complete with a certificate of authenticity.

\$49.95 ea. Item # NECOF20155

Also Available:

1994 Championship Gold Coin

\$49.95 ea. Item # NECOF20154



Nebraska "Go Big Red" Nostalgic Stein

This antique looking Huskers stein displays a bold "Big Red" logo and an embossed football design. Holds 24 oz. of your favorite drink. Hurry, quantities are limited.

\$48.95 ea.

Item # **NECOF20322**



Call Toll Free Today!

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All products are subject to UPS shipping charges

1994 Huskers National Championship Football

Commemorate the 1994 National Championship with this full leather football. Each football features a bold and colorful design, only 92 footballs remain!

\$44.95 ea. Item # NECOF19884



Huskers Back to Back Championship Plaque

This plaque commemorates the Huskers Back to Back Championships. Featuring the 1994 and 1995 season scores and a unique textured football field, all mounted on a walnut base.

\$74.95 ea. Item # NECOF20162



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ALL-STAR SPORTS
COLLECTIBLES



COLLECTIBLES

Huskers



Autographed Tommy Frazier Audio Wall Mount Lithograph

Relive the thrill of the Huskers National Championship by capturing Tommy Frazier's 75 yard touchdown run on this stunning hand signed piece. Each lithograph contains a micro electronic audio module containing Kent Pavelka's exciting play by play call. Just a push of a button, lets you relive this dramatic play. Each piece is a individually hand numbered, limited edition, and comes with a certificate of authenticity.

\$179.95 ea. Item # NECOF20244

Also Available:
Autographed Frazier
Desktop Lithograph

\$119.95 ea. Item # NECOF20245

Nebraska Back to Back National Championship Hat
Celebrate the Husker's Back to Back National Championships with this wool blend adjustable black hat. Each hat features a bright embroidered Back to Back design.

\$19.95 ea. Item # NECOF20185



National Championship Stein

Cheers to the Huskers National Championship with this limited edition, hand numbered 24 oz., ceramic stein. Each stein features the scores from the 95-96 winning season, and are limited to an edition of 1,996.

\$59.95 ea. Item # NECOF20186

Also Available:
Back To Back Glass Stein
\$44.95 ea. Item # NECOF20187



Nebraska Cornhuskers Helmet Clock

Make sure you're not late for the next Huskers kickoff with this attractive Nebraska helmet clock. Displayed on a framed field design, this three hand clock is mounted on a full size replica helmet.

\$49.95 ea. Item # NECOF20435



Heisman Winner's Football

Commemorate two of Nebraska's most legendary players with this full leather, autographed football. Every football features the signatures of Heisman superstars Johnny Rodgers and Mike Rozier. This item is limited to an edition of 5,000, and comes with a certificate of authenticity.

\$289.95 ea. Item # NECOF20073



Nebraska Back To Back Championship Mat

Display your enthusiasm for the Huskers right on your front door step. This sturdy 28" x 52" door mat is made of durable, high quality industrial grade carpet with a nonskid rubber backing. It also features long lasting permanent carpet dyes.

\$44.95 ea. Item # NECOF20434

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1-800-65-ORDER
Ask for Operator: Huskers 96
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UPS shipping charges

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ALL-STAR SPORTS
COLLECTIBLES



COLLECTIBLES

Huskers

A. Reflection of Perfection
Relive the excitement with a behind the scenes look at the inspirational 1996 Fiesta Bowl.

\$24.95 ea. Item # NECOF20280

B. 1996 Fiesta Bowl Game
Recapture the 1996 Fiesta Bowl when the Huskers sent the Gators back to Florida bruised and battered.

\$24.95 ea. Item # NECOF20282

C. A Decade of Dominance
Remember Nebraska's decade of dominance including the 1995 regular and post season games.

\$24.95 ea. Item # NECOF20292

D. Finished Business
Follow the Huskers behind the scenes as they prepare to defeat the Miami Hurricanes in the 1995 Orange Bowl.

\$24.95 ea. Item # NECOF20279

E. Fourth Straight Big Eight
Catch all the action in this 1994 Big Eight Championship highlight video.

\$19.95 ea. Item # NECOF20278

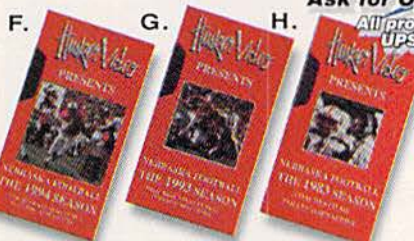
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Ask for Operator Huskers 96

All products are subject to UPS shipping charges

No refunds on viewed videos.



F. 1994 Orange Bowl Game Video
With their fourth big eight championship under their belt, the Huskers take on the Hurricanes in this 1994 Orange Bowl video. You'll love reliving the inspirational ending to this perfect season.

\$24.95 ea. Item # NECOF20281

G. 1993 Orange Bowl Game Video
This season went into the history books as one of Nebraska's finest. Ride a roller coaster through the challenging schedule, towards the National Championship against Florida State.

\$19.95 ea. Item # NECOF20276

H. 1983 Orange Bowl Game Video
A perfect regular season led to a showdown by Miami, in what turned out to be one of the most thrilling National Championship games ever played.

\$19.95 ea. Item # NECOF20277



Back to Back Championship Coin Set

Commemorating the Back to Back National Titles, this matched numbered, limited edition set is one of a kind. Enclosed in a red acrylic case, each coin is made of one ounce, .999% pure silver. These coin sets are limited to an edition of 500, and come complete with a certificate of authenticity.

\$82.50 ea. Item # NECOF20157



I. Volume 1 The Devaney Era
Bob Devaney takes the Huskers to a national championship.

\$19.50 ea. Item # NECOF20264

J. Volume 2 The Osborne Teams
The Huskers go head to head with the best in college football.

\$27.95 ea. Item # NECOF20266

K. Volume 3 The Game of the Century
Nebraska vs. Oklahoma—1971, an unforgettable championship.

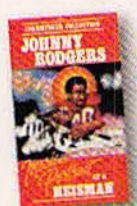
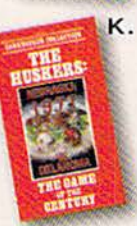
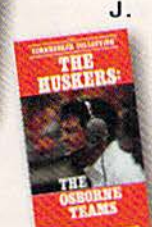
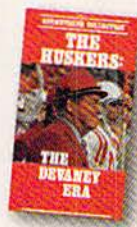
\$19.50 ea. Item # NECOF20263

L. Volume 4 Huskers vs. Penn State
Follow the five year Husker vs. Penn State rivalry. 1979 - 1983.

\$19.95 ea. Item # NECOF20291

M. Volume 5 Johnny Rodgers; Musical Portrait of a Heisman
Follow Rodgers from the local YMCA to the prestigious Heisman award.

\$24.95 ea. Item # NECOF20265



Nebraska Back to Back Championship Watch

This attractive watch features a genuine black leather strap, a unique floating second hand, gold tone casings, and is water resistant up to 99 feet. Limited to an edition of 1,996, and comes with a one year manufacturers warranty.

\$54.95 ea. Item # NECOF20169



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1996 CORNHUSKER FALL ROSTER

NO. LET.	PLAYER	POS.	HT.	WT.	YEAR	HOMETOWN (HIGH SCHOOL)
48 *	Alderman, Dave	LCB	5-10	190	Sr.	Omaha, NE (North)
	Alexander, Dan	FB/LB	6-1	230	Fr.	Wentzville, MO
#90	Allen, Derek	DT	6-3	270	Fr.	Russellville, AR
#94	Almanzar, Luis	DT	6-3	260	Fr.	Jersey City, N.J. (Dickinson)
70 **	Anderson, Eric	OT	6-4	300	Jr.	Lincoln, NE (Southeast)
	Anderson, Josh	DB	5-9	160	Fr.	Wahoo, NE
96	Antholz, Travis	RR	6-4	220	Fr.	McDonald, KS (Cheylin)
#35	Applegate, Sean	WB	5-9	180	Fr.	Lincoln, NE (Lincoln High)
#40	Arens, Erick	WLB	6-2	210	Fr.	Randolph, NE
81	Arnold, Larry	SLB	6-4	240	Sr.	Copley, OH
	Baker, Rod	RB	6-1	190	Fr.	Hastings, NE (Adams Central)
57	Baldwin, Matt	C	6-1	270	Fr.	Arvada, CO (Bearcreek)
87	Bassett, Chris	LR	6-0	230	Jr.	Tracy, MN
	Becvarovski, Sasho	OL	6-5	255	Fr.	Crown Point, IND (Lake Central)
24 *	Benes, Jason	FS	5-11	180	Jr.	Valparaiso, NE (Raymond Central)
21 ***	Benning, Damon	IB	5-11	210	Sr.	Omaha, NE (Northwest)
	Beveridge, Tom	REC	6-2	190	Fr.	Sutherland, NE
17 *	Blahak, Chad	RCB	5-9	190	Sr.	Lincoln, NE (High)
	Boellstorff, Blaine	LB	6-2	205	Fr.	Johnson, NE (Johnson-Brock)
20 ***	Booker, Michael	LCB	6-2	205	Sr.	Oceanside, CA (El Camino)
35 *	Brown, Kris	PK	5-10	200	So.	Southlake, TX (Carroll)
14 *	Brown, Lance	SE/WB	5-11	190	So.	Papillion, NE (Papillion-La Vista)
	Brown, Mike	DB	6-0	190	Fr.	Scottsdale, Ariz. (Saguaro)
	Brown II, Ralph	DB	5-11	170	Fr.	Hienda Heights, CA (Bishop Amat)
#47	Buettnerback, Ben	MLB	5-11	210	Fr.	Hastings, NE
90 **	Carpenter, Tim	TE	6-3	250	Jr.	Columbus, NE
6 *	Cheatham, Kenny	SE	6-4	210	So.	Phoenix, AZ (Stone Mountain)
9	Christo, Monte	QB	6-0	195	So.	Kearney, NE
68	Clausen, Jeff	OT	6-6	295	Fr.	Dixon, ILL
42	Cobb, Josh	FB	5-11	240	So.	Wallace, NE
83	DeBates, T.J.	TE	6-3	235	Fr.	Stewartville, MN
	Deitloff, Chris	C	6-1	180	Fr.	Omaha, NE (Millard North)
2 **	Dennis, Leslie	RCB	5-8	185	Jr.	Bradenton, FL (Southeast)
	Diekmann, Billy	OL	6-3	270	Fr.	Cheney, NE (Norris)
75 ***	Dishman, Chris	OG	6-3	310	Sr.	Cozad, NE
#20	Dittrick, George	ROV	6-0	190	Fr.	Omaha, NE
	Douglas, Trenton	OL	6-2	250	Fr.	Assaria, KS (Southeast of Saline)
#74	Drum, Brandon	DT	6-3	260	Fr.	Columbus, NE (Scotus)
	Dush, Jason	DL	6-1	220	Fr.	Columbus, NE
	Edwards, J.R.	REC	6-2	175	Fr.	Lincoln, NE (Southeast)
22	Eicher, Chad	IB	6-3	220	Jr.	Seward, NE
	Evans, DeAngelo	RB	5-9	210	Fr.	Wichita, KS (Collegiate)
43 *	Farley, Terrell	WLB	6-1	205	Sr.	Columbus, GA (Independence JC)
	Ferrell, Justin	OL	6-3	280	Fr.	McAllen, TX (Sharyland)
#87	Finister, Demond	SE	5-10	175	Fr.	Boys Town, NE
	Finley, Clint	QB	6-1	190	Fr.	Cuero, TX
#88	Fischer, Craig	SE	6-0	170	Fr.	Leigh, NE
	Fischer, Eric	DB	5-10	165	Fr.	Leigh, NE
56 *	Foreman, Jay	MLB	6-1	225	So.	Eden Prairie, MN
	Frame, Tim	REC	6-0	185	Fr.	Hershey, NE
37	Froehlich, Russell	SLB	6-0	205	So.	Omaha, NE (Bellevue East)
7	Frost, Scott	QB	6-3	215	Jr.	Wood River, NE (Stanford)
12 *	Fullman, Mike	RCB	5-7	170	Sr.	Roselle, N.J. (Rutgers)
53	Fulton, Lonnie	OT	6-5	255	Fr.	Grand Island, NE (Grand Island)
85	Gard, Sean	LR	5-11	215	Jr.	Omaha, NE (Central)
	Gentile, Mike	REC	5-11	190	Fr.	Lockport, ILL (Mount Carmel)
72	Gessford, Ben	OT	6-2	280	So.	Lincoln, NE (East)
	Gibson, John	REC/DB	6-0	170	Fr.	Papillion, NE (LaVista)
	Gill, Bobby	DL	6-0	230	Fr.	Lincoln, NE (Northeast)
30 *	Green, Ahman	IB	6-0	210	So.	Omaha, NE (Central)
	Guidry, George	DE	6-3	225	Fr.	Lake Charles, LA (Washington)
86	Gumm, Trent	SLB	6-2	225	So.	Columbus, NE
#80	Haafke, Billy	SE	5-11	185	So.	S. Sioux City, NE
#17	Hadenfeldt, Dan	PK	5-11	180	Fr.	Des Moines, IA (Valley)
	Hamik, Brad	DB/REC	6-0	160	Fr.	Hawarden, IA (W. Sioux)
	Hastings, Chris	TE	6-3	215	Fr.	Gretna, NE
54	Havlovic, Aaron	C	6-3	270	Fr.	Osceola, NE (David City Aquinas)
82	Held, Ryan	SE	6-2	185	Jr.	Overland Park, KS (Blue Valley N.)
#74	Henson, Kyle	OT	6-1	290	So.	Waverly, NE (Kentucky)
59 *	Heskew, Josh	C	6-3	280	Jr.	Yukon, OK (Mustang)
44 **	Hesse, Jon	MLB	6-4	250	Sr.	Lincoln, NE (Southeast)
	Hochstein, Russ	OL	6-3	235	Fr.	Hartington, NE (Cedar Catholic)
49 *	Hogrefe, Quint	WLB	5-11	210	So.	Auburn, NE
5 ***	Holbein, Brendan	SE	5-9	190	Sr.	Cozad, NE
66	Horst, Joe	OG	6-1	270	So.	Wood River, NE
62 *	Hoskinson, Matt	OG	6-1	280	Jr.	Battle Creek, NE
53	Hunting, Matt	WLB	6-3	220	Jr.	Cozad, NE
50	Jackson, Julius	MLB	6-0	220	Fr.	Gainesville, TX
88 *	Jackson, Sheldon	TE	6-4	250	So.	Diamond Bar, CA (Damien)
34 *	Jackson, Vershan	TE	6-0	245	Jr.	Omaha, NE (South)
	Jeffrey, Tom	RCB	5-11	185	Fr.	Lincoln, NE (East)
	Johnson, Eric	DB	6-1	195	Fr.	Phoenix, AZ (Alhambra)
52	Johnson, Marcus	OG	6-4	285	Fr.	Oceanside, CA (Vista)
#42	Jones, Dave	LR	6-3	240	So.	Osmond, NE
69	Julch, Adam	OT	6-5	320	Fr.	Omaha, NE (Burke)
	Kaiser, Loran	LB/DE	6-5	240	Fr.	Farwell, NE (Saint Paul)
57 *	Kelsay, Chad	RR	6-3	230	So.	Auburn, NE
22	Kingston, Ben	FB	6-1	230	Fr.	Omaha, NE (Westside)
#83	Kobus, Chad	TE	6-2	220	Fr.	Columbus, NE
#43	Kohl, Josh	WLB	6-1	225	Fr.	Hastings, NE
19 *	Kosch, Jesse	P	6-0	185	Jr.	Columbus, NE (Scotus)
23 *	Lafleur, Bill	P	5-11	200	So.	Norfolk, NE (Catholic)
89 **	Lake, Jeff	SE	6-4	205	Jr.	Columbus, NE (Lakeview)
40 *	Legate, Billy	FB	5-11	215	So.	Elgin, NE (Clearwater)
#80	Lenners, Curt	RR	6-3	205	Fr.	Filley, NE

NUMERICAL ROSTER

1	Frankie London.....QB
2	Leslie Dennis.....RCB
#2	Alex McClymont.....RCB
3	Eric Warfield.....FS
4	Octavious McFarlin.....ROV
5	Brendan Holbein.....SE
6	Kenny Cheatham.....SE
7	Scott Frost.....QB
8	Brian Morro.....P
9	Monte Christo.....QB
10	Mike Minter.....ROV
11	Matt Turman.....QB
12	Mike Fullman.....RCB
#12	Jeff Perino.....QB
13	Ted Retzlaff.....PK
14	Lance Brown.....WB/SE
#14	Greg List.....ROV
15	Kareem Sears.....RR
16	Eric Stokes.....FS
17	Chad Blahak.....RCB
#17	Andy Miller.....WB
#17	Dan Hadenfeldt.....PK
19	Jesse Kosch.....P
20	Michael Booker.....LCB
#20	George Dittrick.....ROV
21	Damon Benning.....IB
#21	Kalin Makaiwi.....ROV
22	Ben Kingston.....FB
#22	Chad Eicher.....IB
23	Bill Lafleur.....P
24	Jason Benes.....FS
#24	Jason Olnes.....IB
25	Jon Vedral.....WB
#25	Jeff Wells.....FS
26	Jerome Peterson.....RCB
27	Steve Raymond.....IB
#27	Andy Thompson.....LCB
28	Brian Schuster.....FB
#28	Jamel Williams.....SLB
29	Shavin Wiggins.....WB
#29	Greg McGraw.....FS
30	Ahman Green.....IB
31	James Sims.....IB
32	Eric Walther.....FS
33	Sean Wieting.....WB
34	Vershan Jackson.....TE
35	Kris Brown.....PK
#35	Sean Applegate.....WB
#35	Casey Macken.....WLB
37	Tony Ortiz.....SLB
#37	Russell Froehlich.....SLB
39	Mike Roberts.....ROV
40	Billy Legate.....FB
#40	Erick Arens.....WLB
42	Josh Cobb.....FB
#42	Dave Jones.....LR
43	Terrell Farley.....WLB
#43	Josh Kohl.....WLB
44	Jon Hesse.....MLB
45	Joel Makovicka.....FB
46	Brian Shaw.....SLB
47	Ben Buttenback.....MLB
48	Dave Alderman.....LCB
#48	Ryan Brauer.....WLB
49	Quint Hogrefe.....WLB
50	Julius Jackson.....MLB
51	Matt Vrzal.....C

1996 CORNHUSKER FALL ROSTER

NUMERICAL ROSTER

52	Marcus Johnson.....OG
52	Keely Watson.....WLB
53	Matt Hunting.....WLB
53	Lonnie Fulton.....OT
54	Aaron Havlovic.....C
56	Jay Foreman.....MLB
56	Doug Seaman.....C
57	Chad Kelsay.....RR
57	Matt Baldwin.....C
59	Josh Heskey.....C
61	Brandt Wade.....OG
62	Matt Hoskinson.....OG
63	James Sherman.....OG
64	Jon Zatechka.....OG
65	Jason Schwab.....OG
65	Theron Troxel.....DT
66	Joe Horst.....OG
67	Aaron Taylor.....C
68	Jeff Clausen.....OT
69	Adam Julch.....OT
69	Jim Tansey.....OT
70	Eric Anderson.....OT
71	Mike Van Cleave.....OG
72	Ben Gessford.....OT
72	Tom Millus.....DT
73	Fred Pollack.....OT
74	Scott Saltsman.....DT
74	Kyle Henson.....OT
74	Brandon Drum.....DT
75	Chris Dishman.....OG
77	Adam Treu.....OT
78	Kory Mikos.....OT
79	Ross Tessendorf.....DT
80	Billy Haafke.....SE
80	Curt Lenners.....RR
81	Larry Arnold.....SLB
82	Ryan Held.....SE
83	Bryce Miller.....LR
83	T.J. DeBates.....TE
83	Chad Kobus.....TE
84	Mike Rucker.....LR
85	Aaron Wills.....TE
85	Sean Gard.....LR
86	Dorrick Roy.....TE
86	Trent Gumm.....SLB
86	Eric Ryan.....RR
87	Chris Bassett.....LR
87	Demond Finister.....SE
87	Brendan Zahl.....LR
88	Sheldon Jackson.....TE
88	Craig Fischer.....SE
89	Jeff Lake.....SE
90	Tim Carpenter.....TE
90	Derek Allen.....DT
91	Ryan Terwilliger.....WLB
92	Travis Toline.....LR
93	Jared Tomich.....RR
94	Larry Townsend.....DT
94	Luis Almanzar.....DT
95	Jason Peter.....DT
96	Travis Antholz.....RR
96	Tom Jeffrey.....RCB
97	Jeff Ogard.....DT
98	Grant Wistrom.....LR
99	Jason Wiltz.....DT

NO. LET.	PLAYER	POS.	HT.	WT.	YEAR	HOMETOWN (HIGH SCHOOL)
#14	List, Greg	ROV	6-0	195	Fr.	Valentine, NE
1	London, Frankie	QB	6-0	170	Fr.	Lake Charles, LA (LaGrange)
	Long, Chace	PK	6-0	180	Fr.	Wahoo, NE
#35	Macken, Casey	WLB	6-0	230	So.	Cozad, NE
#21	Makaiwi, Kalin	ROV	6-0	200	So.	Raymond, WA
45 *	Makovic, Joel	FB	5-11	230	So.	Brainard, NE (East Butler)
2	McClymont, Alex	RCB	5-9	170	So.	Holdrege, NE
4 **	McFarlin, Octavious	ROV	5-11	190	Jr.	Bastrop, TX
#29	McGraw, Greg	FS	5-8	195	Fr.	Millville, N.J.
	McKee, Jake	TE	6-5	195	Fr.	Brewster, KS (Goodland)
78 **	Mikos, Kory	OT	6-5	295	Sr.	Seward, NE
#72	Millus, Tom	DT	6-3	270	Fr.	Lincoln, NE (Pius X)
#17	Miller, Andy	WB	5-10	195	So.	Papillion, NE (Papillion-LaVista)
83	Miller, Bryce	LR	6-5	220	Jr.	Elmwood, NE (Elmwood-Murdock)
	Miller, Willie	FB	6-0	220	Fr.	Omaha, NE (Bellevue West)
10 ***	Minter, Mike	ROV	5-10	190	Sr.	Lawton, OK
	Mooberry, Brandon	RE	6-5	220	Fr.	Lexington, NE
8	Morro, Brian	P	5-9	175	So.	Middletown, N.J. (South)
	Murphy, John	RE	6-4	225	Fr.	Crawford, NE
65	Nelson, Erik	DT	6-3	270	Fr.	Iowa City, IA (City)
97 **	Ogard, Jeff	DT	6-6	300	Sr.	St. Paul, NE
#24	Oines, Jason	IB	5-11	200	Fr.	Albion, NE
37	Ortiz, Tony	SLB	6-0	205	Fr.	Waterbury, CT (Crosby)
#12	Perino, Jeff	QB	6-2	195	Fr.	Durango, CO (Durango)
95 **	Peter, Jason	DT	6-4	285	Jr.	Locust, N.J. (Milford Academy)
26	Peterson, Jerome	RCB	5-7	185	Fr.	Port Allen, LA
	Piening, Hank	RB	6-2	185	Fr.	Lincoln, NE (Milford)
	Polk, Carlos	LB	6-2	210	Fr.	Rockford, IL (Guilford)
73 **	Pollack, Fred	OT	6-4	305	Jr.	Omaha, NE (Creighton)
	Quindt, Brandon	DB	5-11	185	Fr.	Scottsbluff, NE
27	Raymond, Steve	IB	6-0	200	Fr.	Gering, NE
13 *	Retzlaff, Ted	PK	6-0	190	Jr.	Waverly, NE
	Reynolds, Khari	REC/DB	5-11	170	Fr.	May's Landing, N.J. (Egg Harbor)
39 *	Roberts, Mike	ROV	6-1	185	Sr.	Omaha, NE (Central)
	Rooks, Laron	DL	6-3	250	Fr.	Omaha, NE (Central)
86	Roy, Dorrick	TE	6-3	230	So.	Inglewood, CA (Montclair Prep)
84 *	Rucker, Mike	LR	6-6	250	So.	St. Joseph, MO (Benton)
	Runty, Jay	QB	6-1	170	Fr.	Elkhorn, NE
#86	Ryan, Eric	RR	6-1	215	Fr.	Overton, NE
	Saalfeld, Chris	OL	6-2	230	Fr.	North Bend, NE
74 **	Saltsman, Scott	DT	6-2	270	Sr.	Wichita Falls, TX (Rider)
	Schoening, Matt	FB	5-9	195	Fr.	Council Bluffs, IA (Lewis Central)
28 **	Schuster, Brian	FB	5-11	225	Sr.	Fullerton, NE
65	Schwab, Jason	OG	6-1	295	Fr.	Eagan, MN (Cretin-Derham Hall)
	Schwager, Matt	RE	6-5	220	Fr.	Orchard, NE
56	Seaman, Doug	C	6-1	280	Jr.	Bellevue, NE (East)
15	Sears, Kareem	RR	6-2	245	Fr.	Enid, OK
46	Shaw, Brian	SLB	6-1	215	Fr.	Deweese, NE (Sandy Creek)
63	Sherman, James	OG	6-2	305	Fr.	LaVerne, CA (Whittier)
	Siebenborn, Scott	DL	6-4	215	Fr.	Columbus, NE (High)
31 *	Sims, James	IB	6-1	215	Jr.	Omaha, NE (Central)
	Saucie, Travis	RB	5-10	170	Fr.	Hastings, NE (St. Cecilia)
	Stanislav, Jeremy	FB	6-1	190	Fr.	Prague, NE
16 ***	Stokes, Eric	FS	5-11	185	Sr.	Lincoln, NE (East)
#69	Tansey, Jim	OT	6-2	300	Fr.	Cranford, N.J.
67 **	Taylor, Aaron	C	6-1	305	Jr.	Wichita Falls, TX (Rider)
91 ***	Terwilliger, Ryan	WLB	6-5	225	Sr.	Grant, NE
79	Tessendorf, Ross	DT	6-1	275	So.	Columbus, NE (Lakeview)
#27	Thompson, Andy	LCB	5-8	180	Fr.	Omaha, NE (Central)
	Todd, Arby	FB	5-10	220	Fr.	Wellington, MO (Napoleon)
92 *	Toline, Travis	LR	6-3	235	So.	Wahoo, NE
93 **	Tomich, Jared	RR	6-2	260	Sr.	St. John, IN (Lake Central)
94 **	Townsend, Larry	DT	6-4	300	Sr.	San Jose, CA (Yerba Buena)
77 **	Treu, Adam	OT	6-6	300	Sr.	Lincoln, NE (Pius X)
#65	Troxel, Theron	DT	6-4	265	Fr.	Coleridge, NE
11 **	Turman, Matt	QB	5-11	185	Sr.	Wahoo, NE (Neumann)
	Tuttle, Chad	LB	6-1	195	Fr.	Wahoo, NE (Omaha North)
	Urban, Noland	LB	6-2	225	Fr.	Osceola, NE
71 *	Van Cleave, Mike	OG	6-2	285	Jr.	Huffman, TX (Hargrave)
	Vanderhoef, Casey	DB	6-0	205	Fr.	Alpine, Utah
25 **	Vedral, Jon	WB	5-11	205	Sr.	Gregory, S.D.
51 **	Vrzal, Matt	C	6-1	300	Sr.	Grand Island, NE
61 *	Wade, Brandt	OG	6-2	300	So.	Springfield, NE (Platteview)
	Walters, Brian	OL	6-4	220	Fr.	West Point, NE
32 *	Walther, Eric	FS	6-0	175	So.	Juniata, NE (Hastings Adams Central)
	Wardyn, Brandon	TE	6-2	200	Fr.	Farwell, NE (St. Paul)
	Warren, Steve	DL	6-3	275	Fr.	Springfield, MO (Kickapoo)
3 *	Warfield, Eric	FS	6-0	195	Jr.	Texarkana, AR (Arkansas)
	Watchorn, Troy	DB	5-11	175	Fr.	Columbus, NE (High)
#52	Watson, Keely	WLB	6-1	210	Jr.	Pasadena, CA
	Webber, David	OL/DL	6-3	275	Fr.	St. Louis, MO (Hazelwood East)
#25	Wells, Jeff	FS	6-1	200	Fr.	Lincoln, NE (Northeast)
33	Wieting, Sean	WB	5-9	190	Jr.	Tulatin, OR (Tigard)
29	Wiggins, Shevin	WB	5-11	180	So.	Palmetto, FL (Manatee)
	Wiles, Chad	QB	6-1	180	Fr.	Wood River, NE
28 **	Williams, Jamel	SLB	6-2	205	Sr.	Merrillville, IN
85	Wills, Aaron	TE	6-2	240	Fr.	Omaha, NE (Burke)
99	Wiltz, Jason	DT	6-3	295	So.	New Orleans, LA (St. Augustine)
	Winston, Terry	DL	5-11	175	Fr.	Los Angeles, CA (Verbum Dei)
98 **	Wistrom, Grant	RR	6-5	250	Jr.	Webb City, MO
87	Zahl, Brendan	LR	6-3	235	Jr.	Stratton, NE
64 **	Zatechka, Jon	OG	6-2	290	Jr.	Lincoln, NE (East)

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Off To An Early, Impressive Start

Huskers have already landed five verbal commitments including quarterback Eric Crouch, Bobby Newcombe

Nebbraska heads into the 1996 season and the 1997 recruiting year on top of the college football world. Going for their third straight national title (should be their fourth) the Huskers are kings of college football and show no signs of giving up the throne soon.

Ranked preseason No. 1 by many publications including *Huskers Illustrated*, the Huskers add to an already loaded varsity a top five recruiting class from '96. The only questions coming out of the class center around the academic standing of All-American defensive back **Robert Pollard** of Orange Park, Fla., and offensive lineman **Justin Ferrell** of McAllen (Sharyland), Texas. Whether they would report with the rest of the freshman was unsettled at press time.

The Cornhuskers have set a precedent over the past two recruiting seasons nailing down verbal commitments early. Nebraska wasn't the first to do it, but it has perfected it to the point that the Huskers do it better than anybody else.

Already the Cornhuskers' 1997 recruiting class is starting to take shape.

Quarterback was a frustrating recruiting position for the Huskers a year ago. It seemed the top seven run/pass quarterbacks in the country at one time or another were either leaning toward Nebraska or thinking seriously about them. However, when the smoke cleared, players went elsewhere. The Huskers were fortunate to land **Clint Finley**, an exceptional athlete who might turn out to be better than any in the top seven.

With 1996 still on their minds, the

Husker coaching staff still has quarterback as a recruiting priority this year. Before Scott Frost took his first snap in fall drills Nebraska had received verbal commitments from two of the top run/pass quarterbacks in the country.



The Huskers didn't have to travel far for one as **Eric Crouch** (6-0, 185, 4.5) of Omaha (Millard North), Neb., has always dreamed

of playing for the Huskers. It turns out the feeling is mutual.

"When you grow up in Nebraska and you are a running style of quarterback like me, you just hope you are good enough to someday play at Nebraska," Crouch said. "I think my style of play fits what they are trying to do and I am proud to be going to play for coach Osborne."

Crouch rushed for 1,960 yards and 27 touchdowns last season, while passing for another 812, nine touchdowns and two interceptions. A first-team all-state quarterback, Crouch has run a 10.68 (100 meters) and 22.3 (200 meters). Notre Dame, Ohio State and Texas went home disappointed.

Bobby Newcombe (6-0, 185, 4.5) of Albuquerque, N.M., is another great athlete who couldn't wait to commit to the Huskers. Both Newcombe and Crouch can also play in the secondary leaving the Huskers the option of signing another quarterback in February.

Signing linebackers is also a priority.

The Huskers have received a commitment from one of the best in the country in **Kyle Vanden Bosch** (6-4, 230, 4.6) of Inwood (West Lyon), Iowa. Bosch dominates from sideline to sideline and could have signed anywhere in the country.

RECRUITING

In state, things are going well for the Huskers with three of the top four prospects already giving verbal.

In addition to Crouch, **Irwin Swinney** (6-0, 180, 4.42) and **Kyle Kollmorgen** (6-4, 267, 5.2) both of Lincoln (Southeast) decided they wanted to stay close to home.

Swinney is a raw talent heading into only his second year of organized football. He's got a great first year to build off of with 46 passes for 555 yards and six touchdowns behind him. Defensively, he had 36 solo stops and two interceptions at cornerback.

Kollmorgen is the same type of offensive line prospect which Nebraska usually turns into All-Americans.

The state of Nebraska normally turns out eight to 10 athletes which draw Division I-A scholarships. This year will be no different.

Offensive lineman **Robert Jefferson** (6-8, 306, 5.2) graded out at 82 percent on his blocking schemes last season and attended the Husker summer camp. Jefferson already has his recruiting choices narrowed down to Michigan, Nebraska and

Kansas State.

Matt Davidson (6-2, 175, 4.5) of Tecumseh is a wide receiver who is a small school wonder. Playing in Class C, Davidson pilled up some unbelievable numbers last season latching onto 69 passes for 1,516 yards and 26 scores. Then throw another 10 touchdowns in kick and punt returns, and you have a dominate football standout. **Anthony Wilkenson** (6-6, 300, 5.5), also out of Lincoln (Southeast), will draw some recruiting attention.

Wilkenson hopes the Cornhuskers come calling, but is drawing interest from Kansas State, Wyoming and Iowa State as well.

Luck Denny (6-0, 200, 4.7) of Omaha (Central) is another wide receiver with outstanding talents. A three-year starter, Denny lists Nebraska, Kansas State, Iowa and Iowa State amongst his favorites.

Steve Alstadt (6-5, 255, 5.2) out of Ft. Calhoun is an excellent offensive line prospect who can bench 305 and squat 440 pounds. Alstadt likes Nebraska and Kansas State at the top of his list with Missouri, Wyoming, Stanford and Pennsylvania also chasing.

The only real running back prospect in the state is **Levi Mehl** (6-0, 190, 4.6) of Crete.

Mehl rushed for 1,298 yards and 11 touchdowns last season, but also played well at linebacker with 112 tackles and two sacks. Mehl hopes a great senior season will attract interest from Nebraska, Kansas State, Kansas and Stanford.

Dan Reeves (5-11, 175, 4.5) of Central City will also be watched closely.

Jonathan Coyne (6-4, 209, 4.7) out of Omaha Westside needs get into the weightroom, but has the frame and skills that college coaches love. Coyne hopes to attract attention from Nebraska, Iowa State and Kansas State.

Already the Huskers are off to a great start in the recruiting wars and things will only get better as their season gets underway. Many of the top 100 players in the country are already listing the Huskers among their top choices. If things go according to plan on the playing field this season, then don't be surprised if Nebraska signs one of the top five classes in the country for the fourth straight year. ■

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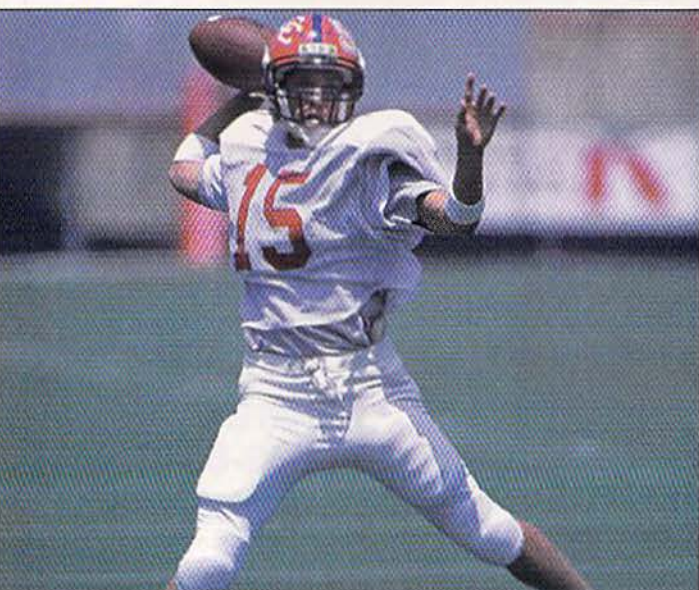
Willing To Walk

The chance to one day earn a scholarship at Nebraska, has many players turning down offers from other schools in favor of walking on

Linebacker Nolan Urban spent the summer working at a steel mill in preparation for his first walkon season at Nebraska.



Chris Wildrick



Chris Wildrick

Like his father, Steve, Jay Runty will try to make a name for himself as a walkon quarterback.

Noland Urban says he isn't concerned about handling the pressure of being a Nebraska football walkon. For one thing, he's been promised a scholarship if he progresses as he should. For another, he's no stranger to pressure, not after what he had to face as a high school freshman.

Urban lives in Osceola, Neb., a small town located approximately 70 miles to the west and north of Lincoln. He chose to attend Stromsburg, Neb., High School, however.

Stromsburg is just six miles from Osceola. Because of their proximity and fairly comparable populations, the two communities' high schools are long-time athletic rivals. The state of Nebraska allows students to attend schools in other districts, and Noland decided it would be in his best interests as a football player to commute the seven miles to Stromsburg High.

Understandably, his decision was a matter of some controversy in the Polk County communities. "When I was a (high school) freshman, that's when it all started," Urban said recently.

He was a starter on the Stromsburg High football team as a ninth-grader. When Stromsburg played Osceola, "we just killed them, and I had one of my best games," he said. You get the picture.

Early on, it was difficult, said the 6-foot-3, 236-pound Urban, who plans to play middle linebacker at Nebraska. Two summers at Nebraska's Big Red football camp reinforced the belief that he could play Division I-A football. "I really got to know the coaches," he said. "That's when I got my first taste of (the) reality (of big-time college football). I thought I had the ability to play there at the end of my junior year. By my senior year, I knew I could."

He chose to walk on at Nebraska rather than accept a scholarship elsewhere.

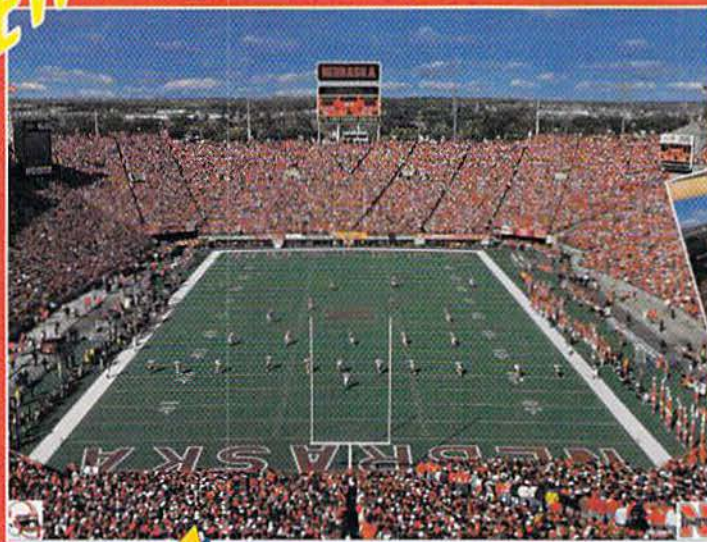
Urban is among at least 37 high school athletes who have announced their intentions of walking on with the Cornhuskers this fall and pursuing such a dream. Despite attempts by the NCAA to restrict walkons, they have continued to play significant roles at Nebraska. Among those on this year's team who originally walked on are projected starters Brendan Holbein, Adam Treu, Jon Vedral and Brian Schuster.

The list of incoming walkons includes several who rushed for impressive yardage totals last season, including Travis Soucie from Hastings (St. Cecilia), Neb., and Jeremy Stanislav from Prague, Neb. Soucie ranked second in the state in rushing, with 2,175 yards. Stanislav, who played six-man football, gained 2,132 yards.

Jay Runty, a quarterback from Elkhorn, Neb., High School, is the son of former Cornhusker quarterback Steve Runty, who led Nebraska to a 40-13 victory against UCLA in Tom Osborne's first game as head coach. Steve Runty started in place of an injured Dave Humm. Like father, like son. Steve Runty was a walkon. He came from Ogallala, Neb.

Urban is as certain of that as he was in his decision to attend Stromsburg High. Now, he has the support of both communities as he attempts to succeed as a Cornhusker. "I know what I've got to do." ■

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C

huck and Dorothy Erstad have tickets for a flight to Vancouver, B.C., in late August. The trip "was going to be our vacation," Dorothy said. "I hope we don't have to use them now."

The Erstads picked Vancouver as their vacation destination not for its scenery, but rather because at the time they made the reservations, their oldest son, Darin, was the starting center fielder and leadoff hitter for the Vancouver Canadians baseball team in the Triple-A Pacific Coast League. Their vacation was going to be spent watching Darin play ball.

It still can be that, but probably not in Vancouver. In mid-June, while he was warming up in the outfield before a game in Edmonton, Alberta, Erstad's manager told him he had been called up by the California Angels. Starting center fielder Jim Edmonds had been placed on the 15-day disabled list because of a sprained ligament in his right thumb. The Angels needed a replacement.

Erstad left the ballpark in Edmonton and flew to Vancouver to pick up a few personal things, then he continued on to Los Angeles, where he checked into a hotel, ate quickly and went out to Anaheim Stadium for a game, which he started, against the Toronto Blue Jays.

Dorothy and Chuck, as well as Darin's younger brother Bryan and older sister Heidi, were among those who traveled to Anaheim for his major league debut. There were seven others in the hastily organized tour group from Jamestown, N.D., including a grandfather and three of Erstad's long-time friends.

Erstad telephoned his parents immediately after being told of his promotion. He called in the early evening on Thursday, and at 7 a.m. on Friday, the Erstad fans boarded a jetliner in Fargo, N.D., which is about 100 miles from Jamestown. It made for a long day. No one was complaining, however.

Erstad walked in his first at-bat and scored a run. But the effects of the whirlwind trip that had begun in Edmonton 24 hours earlier finally caught up with him. He struck out the next five times in a row. "We were a little bit concerned," said Dorothy, who watched her son go 0-for-8 in his first two games.

Darin got his first big league base hit, a single, in his third game, on Father's Day.

"He gave his dad a Father's Day gift," his mom said.

With his first hit, Erstad regained the swing that made him the first player chosen in the 1995 major league draft, following a junior season at Nebraska in which he hit .410, with 19 home runs and 76 runs-batted-in. He was 3-for-5 with a home run, three RBI, two runs scored and a stolen base in his fourth game at Comiskey Park in Chicago. He went 2-for-5 the next night, and 2-for-4 the night after that.

Erstad also distinguished himself defensively in center field. He was in a groove.

"He's playing with confidence," said Cornhusker baseball coach John Sanders, who watched the Chicago games on television. "You can see that because he'll take chances (in the field). Darin has opened some eyes, no question."

Erstad's rise to the major leagues has been rapid. After signing for what has been reported as more than \$1.5 mil-

RAPID RISER

Darin Erstad wasted little time breaking into the Angels' crowded outfield as a rookie
• Mike Babcock

Photo by Debora Robinson/California Angels

lion, he hit .363 in 25 games with the Angels' Class A Lake Elsinore team in the California League in the summer of 1995, then hit .344 in 38 games in the Arizona instructional league in the fall. He batted .346 in 26 at-bats during the Angels' spring training before being assigned to Vancouver to start the season. He hit .305 in 59 games with Vancouver before getting the call-up.

Sanders hasn't been surprised by Erstad's immediate success. "You're talking about a No. 1 draft pick, so he's in pretty elite company," said Sanders. "He did well in the fall. I thought he might even have a chance to break (spring training) camp with the big league club. I'm not trying to be a general manager, but I thought they might deal somebody to make room for him, maybe get a pitcher or two."

There was no place for Erstad in the Angels' outfield, however. Edmonds was set in center field, after hitting .290 with 33 home runs and 107 RBI in 1995, his second



full season in the majors. Tim Salmon, the American League Rookie of the Year in 1993, played right field. And Garret Anderson, who was second in Rookie of the Year voting last season after hitting .321, played left field.

"They've got an unbelievable outfield," Sanders said. Plus, the outfielders are young. Anderson is 24 years old. Edmonds is 26. And Salmon will celebrate his 28th birthday on Aug. 24.

Because of that situation, the 22-year-old Erstad, whom the *Orange County Register* has described as having Edmonds' versatility and Salmon's temperament, expected to be sent back to Vancouver when Edmonds came off the disabled list. He was hitting over .300 when Edmonds returned to the lineup, however, so the Angels decided to keep him. With Edmonds to play center field, Erstad was moved to left.

Rod Carew, California's Hall of Fame hitting instructor, hasn't made significant adjustments in Erstad's

swing. Carew "will give you a point here and there, but he's not a guy who will mess with your swing," Erstad told Curt McKeever of the *Lincoln Journal Star*. "He keeps it real simple."

The left-handed hitting Erstad worked out with the Nebraska baseball team in Lincoln before reporting for spring training. "Change in his swing? I was watching specifically for that," Sanders said. "He's made a few adjustments for situational hitting. But the swing is the same."

Erstad's textbook swing was among several factors that led to his recruitment by Sanders. Erstad was a multi-sport athlete at Jamestown High, where he competed in football, hockey and track and field. He was chosen as the North Dakota Athlete of the Year by the *Associated Press* as a senior.

His high school didn't field a varsity baseball team, however, so Erstad had to wait until summer, when he

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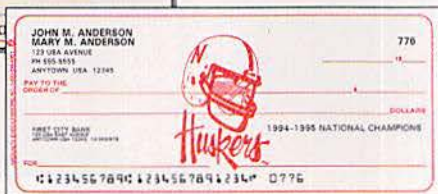
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played for the Jamestown Eagles' American Legion team. In a ceremony between games of a double-header on the day Erstad was drafted by the Angels, his Legion jersey was retired.

Ordinarily, foul balls are returned to play at Legion games. But that night, people kept them for Erstad to sign. By the second game, an emergency supply of baseballs had to be used. Erstad signed autographs not only between games but also for more than two hours at a reception in his honor afterward.

That Erstad had the skills and mindset to become a major league player was apparent, according to Sanders. "The bat speed was there as a freshman. He had that from the beginning."

Erstad was patient at bat and could wait on pitches. He had a strong throwing arm. He had size (6-foot-2, 195 pounds). He had good speed. And he had the proper mindset: he hated to lose. Her son has always been intensely competitive, Dorothy Erstad said.

Although the Erstad family is close, Darin rarely calls home. He has tried to keep a low-profile and concentrate on baseball. "I don't think he's played a game yet (with the Angels) where there hasn't been somebody (a friend or an acquaintance) calling out his name," Dorothy said. "The distractions have been the hardest part, I think, all the people yelling to him from the stands. He's so focused."

Erstad's big league success is a result "of a combination of factors, I think," said Sanders. "Darin came here with what you'd call good tools. Through experience and hard work, he developed those tools into legitimate skills. A lot of guys have the tools but don't develop them into major league skills."

Developing major league skills doesn't ensure major league success, however. A player has to have the right mindset, and even that is no guarantee he'll make it to the big leagues.

"We've had a lot of guys with big league mindsets. Some just came up short because the time wasn't right or whatever. Certain things have to happen to get there," Sanders said. In Erstad's case, that certain thing was Edmonds' injury. If not for that, he probably would have had to wait until September, when the number of players a major league team can carry increases.

Erstad was arguably the best male

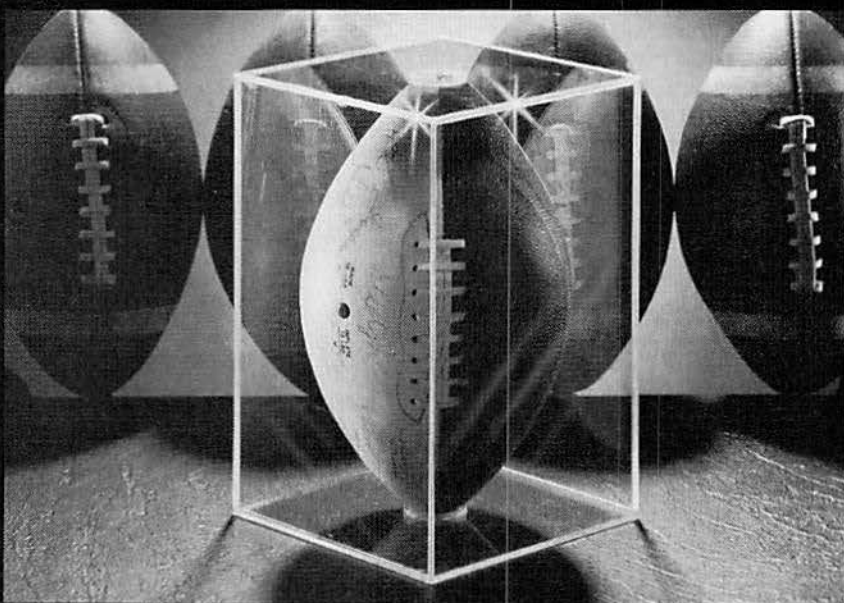
athlete in the Big Eight Conference in 1994-95. He was persuaded to kick for the Cornhuskers' national championship football team in the fall, averaging 42.6 yards per punt as well as kicking three field goals and 10-of-10 extra points as a backup. In the 24-17 victory against Miami in the Orange Bowl game, he averaged 41.1 yards per punt, with a longest of 54 yards.

Darin always imagined that one day he would be a professional ath-

lete, according to his mom. That it would be as a baseball player is appropriate. He was first exposed to a bat and ball sport when he was four days old. Dorothy took him directly from the hospital to a softball game in which his dad played.

Chuck Erstad played softball after an amateur baseball career that earned him a place in the North Dakota Baseball Hall of Fame. Like father, like son . . . but raised to a significantly higher level. ■

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Danny Nee apparently will have only nine players on scholarship this season as a result of Chester Surles' decision to transfer and Rodney Fields' failure to meet the NCAA's initial eligibility requirements.

Surles would have been a junior. Fields, a freshman from Tampa, Fla., will be able to practice but not play in games. Both would have competed for playing time at the second-guard position.

Earlier, Chad Ideus and Leif Nelson, both of whom would have been sophomores, announced they were transferring. As a result, Nebraska will be well below the NCAA maximum of 13 scholarship players.

Even the summer addition of Florida State transfer Avery Curry doesn't help. Curry, a 6-foot-2, 180-pound guard who started 18 games last season for the Seminoles, will have to sit out this year. He will have two years of eligibility remaining.

Nee isn't overly concerned about the lack of numbers, however. Last season, "we had too many players, too many who expected to

play," he said early in the summer. "There were experienced veterans who had played major minutes, major roles (the previous season), and some of those roles diminished or changed as we added personnel. You can't keep them all satisfied. That mixture caused some friction."

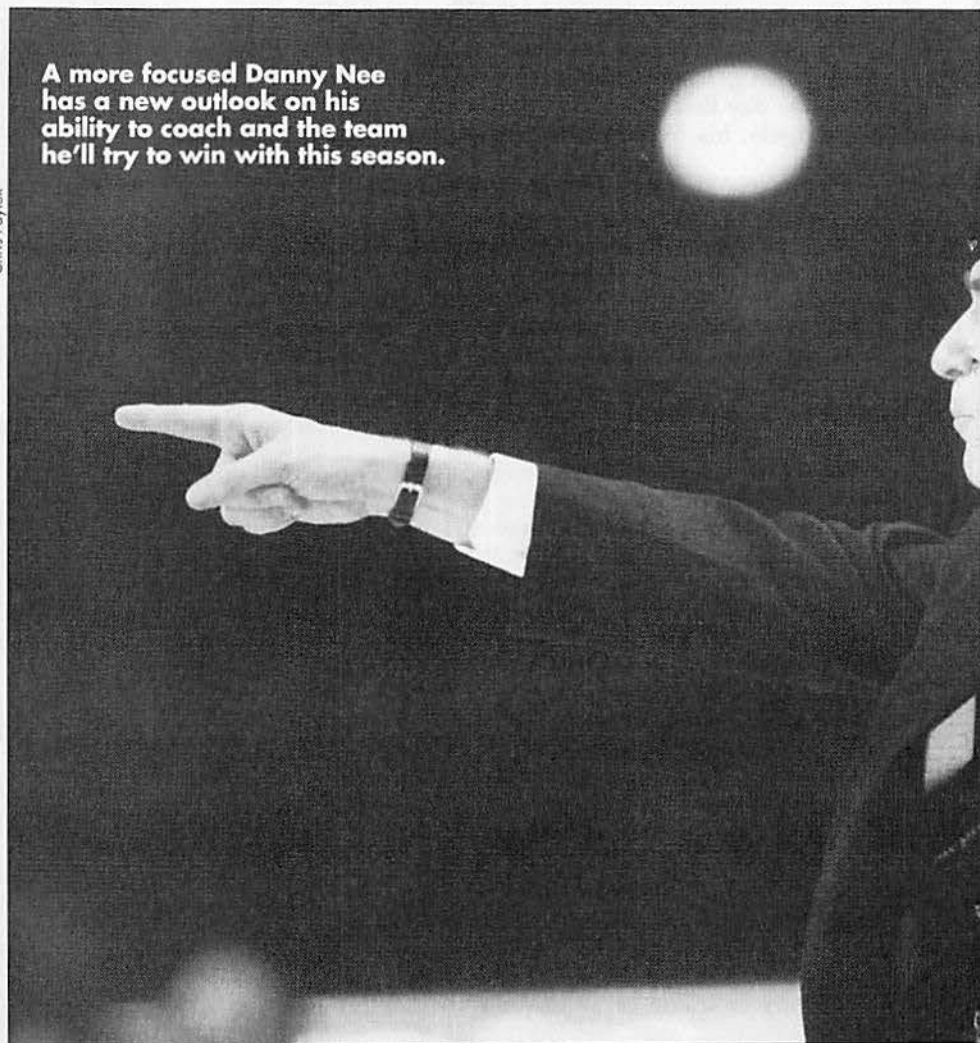
To extend the metaphor, that mixture reached critical mass late in the season, causing a brief boycott of practice and contributing to a streak of 10 losses in 11 games, including nine in a row.

Even though the Cornhuskers regrouped to win the National Invitation Tournament — a dramatic turnaround considering what had preceded it — the experience left scars.

Nee learned from it. "I think because of the losing streak and the circumstances around the walkout, those two things there, my mindset is totally different," he said. "It was very hard. Well, first of all, it was embarrassing. The kids seemed to be very resilient, and it didn't affect them (as much)."

A more focused Danny Nee has a new outlook on his ability to coach and the team he'll try to win with this season.

Chris Foyek



HOOPS

QUALITY, NOT QUANTITY

The Cornhuskers aren't likely to overwhelm opponents with numbers this season • Mike Babcock

"But I don't think they understood the ramifications of it on a national scale. All your peers are looking at you. The media is looking at you. And it's really getting blown out of proportion.

"It just followed us around for a long time. It was very humiliating. Nothing was accomplished by it, or if there was, I don't know what. I don't know what changed. I still

don't understand it."

In retrospect, Nee said, he probably allowed his players too much latitude, a situation he intends to rectify. "As I approach this season, it's clearly understood our expectations of the players. And I'm not taking anything less than exactly what we (coaches) want, if we have to play with five people..."

Nee has been at Nebraska for 10



seasons, during which the Cornhuskers have achieved unprecedented success. They have won 20 or more games five times. They have advanced to postseason play eight times, including four consecutive trips to the NCAA Tournament. And they have won Big Eight Tournament and NIT championships. Yet some were quick to criticize Nee when problems arose last season.

That's the nature of coaching, of course, which Nee understands. Nevertheless, he was surprised, if not confused, by vehement criticism from some who had supported him in the past.

"I felt the (media) coverage of us was both sides of the fence," he said. "If we hit a home run, we're heroes. If we strike out, we're bad? Come on. There's way more going on than that. In the press here, or anywhere, it seems very pronounced to me that they're going to go after the negative things."

"If negative things happen, they're going to be highlighted. But I don't see anyone knocking down my

door about our graduation rates or anything else we're doing on a positive note."

Nebraska's back-to-back national championships in football, and to some degree the Husker volleyball team's NCAA championship last season, have increased expectations for every program.

"When you're (a coach) at the University of Nebraska, you're put under this microscope. Maybe the fans have developed a football mentality," said Nee. "You just learn how to survive."

Missouri's Norm Stewart, the dean of conference basketball coaches, has survived occasional periods of turmoil and criticism. So has Oklahoma State Coach Eddie Sutton. And "I imagine Joe (Cipriano) survived (such times)," Nee said. "I'm not special, or any different. It's just my turn."

Even Tom Osborne drew some criticism during the time the Cornhuskers were losing seven consecutive bowl games. Nee said he was stunned at criticism of Osborne, the nation's winningest active major college football coach. "I'd just stand back and think: 'What you really don't like is his personality. You don't like him because he goes to church. He doesn't drink. And he doesn't play golf. You can't get a piece of this guy.' Well, you can get a piece of me. I was vulnerable in a different way."

"I don't care who you are; they can get you if they want to get you," said Nee.

"Do you get a little crusty? There's no question, I think I have. You get scarred. I think I'm going to be less accessible, more guarded in what I say. Absolutely. I just don't want to set up a trap."

"I have to do things the way I think is best. I have never been more focused or clearer (about what to do) in my entire life, or comfortable with it. I know the things I can't control."

At this point, for example, he can't control the size of his team. There's little chance of finding a player or two with the skills to play now. The Cornhuskers will have to make do.

And they're going to make do Nee's way, or not at all...

"I'm going to be harder on my players," he said. ■

Nebraska's basketball schedule for the 1996-97 season includes a trip to Puerto Rico for the San Juan Classic and 13 games against 1996 NCAA Tournament teams.

The Huskers open practice on Oct. 15, and have exhibition games scheduled against Team Pella (Nov. 7) and Marathon Oil (Nov. 14). In the first year of Big 12 action, NU will play a 16-game conference schedule with two games against each team in the North Division and a single contest against each South Division school.

1996-97 MEN'S BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

DATE	EVENT/OPPONENT	TIME/RESULT
N7	*Team Pella	7:05 p.m.
N14	*Marathon Oil	7:05 p.m.
N23	@ Texas	TBA
N26	Weber State	TBA
N30	Oregon State	TBA
D3	Texas-San Antonio	7:05 p.m.
D6-7	Ameritas Classic&	
D6	vs. Coppin State	6:30 p.m.
D6	Bowling Green vs. Colgate**	8:30 p.m.
D7	Consolation Game	5 p.m.
D7	Championship Game**	7:05 p.m.
Field:	Nebraska, Coppin State, Bowling Green, Colgate	
D11	@ Missouri-Kansas City	7:30 p.m.
D14	@ Northern Iowa	TBA
D21	Minnesota	7:05 p.m.
D30-J2	San Juan Classic#	TBA
D30	vs. S.W. Missouri State	TBA
Field:	Nebraska, S.W. Missouri State, Cincinnati, Bowling Green, Mississippi State, Fresno State, SE Missouri State, Old Dominion	
J4	Iowa State	TBA
J8	Creighton	7:05 p.m.
J11	@ Kansas State	TBA
J15	@ Missouri	7:05 p.m.
J18	Colorado	TBA
J22	@ Kansas	TBA
J25	Kansas State	TBA
J29	Oklahoma State	7:05 p.m.
F1	@ Oklahoma	TBA
F5	Texas	7:05 p.m.
F8	@ Baylor	TBA
F12	Texas A&M	7:05 p.m.
F15	@ Texas Tech	TBA
F19	@ Iowa State	7:05 p.m.
F22	Missouri	TBA
F26	@ Colorado	TBA
M1	Kansas	TBA
M6-9	Big Eight Tournament^	TBA
M7	Quarter Finals	
M8	Semifinals	
M9	Finals	

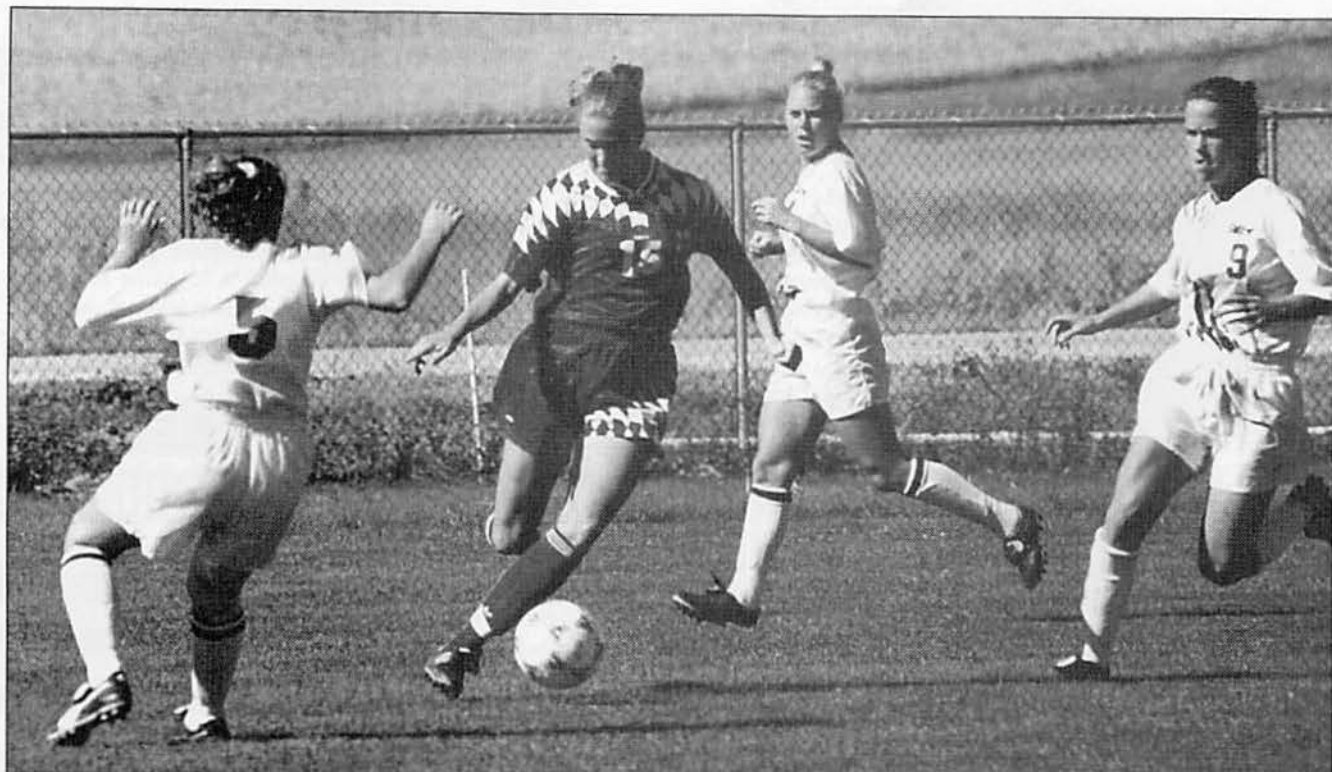
* Exhibition Game • & Lincoln, Neb.

San Juan, Puerto Rico • ^ Kansas City, Mo.

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University of Nebraska

Underdogs No More

With its first preseason ranking adding confidence and plenty of veterans back, the Huskers appear capable of reaching their goal of the NCAA Tournament • Mike Friend

If the Nebraska Cornhusker women's soccer team spent the last two years sneaking up on people, rest assured, those days are over.

Last year's team, in just its second year of existence, finished 10-8, and only two heart-breaking late-season losses away from the NCAA tournament.

"Before, we were always the underdog," said senior defender Kim Ratliff. "Now that we are rated preseason, I don't think we're going to be the underdog that much anymore. Of course, that can be good, and bad at the same time."

Nebraska, which lost to Southern California and dropped a two-overtime decision to No. 21 UCLA in the final regular-season game of 1995, is ranked preseason No. 18 by *College Sports* magazine coming into its 1996 fall campaign.

The Huskers have reached the big-time.

"I wouldn't say that we are shocked by this ranking," Nebraska coach John Walker said. "We played a very difficult schedule last year."

Nebraska played four rated oppo-

After starting the season 1-5, NU rattled off seven-straight wins, including a 6-0 bashing of Florida State. During the streak, Nebraska outscored its opponents 36-1.

While 1996 brings better depth, along with older and more experienced talent, it also brings a tougher schedule and a bigger target on the team's collective backs.

The biggest concern for Walker appears to be injuries. Nebraska has three players coming off of major anterior cruciate ligament injuries, and one player returning from a broken leg.

Sophomores Becky Hogan and Kristen Gay were both healthy in 1995, and their opponents felt the effects of it.

Hogan, a native of West Jordan, Utah, played in all 18 contests, scored seven goals, had six assists

NU RANKED NO. 18

Nebraska has been ranked No. 18 in the *College Sports* preseason Division I-A soccer poll. It is the program's first major ranking.

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. North Carolina | 11. Maryland |
| 2. Notre Dame | 12. Texas A&M |
| 3. Portland | 13. UMass |
| 4. UConn | 14. Wisconsin |
| 5. Santa Clara | 15. UC San Diego |
| 6. Stanford | 16. William & Mary |
| 7. Duke | 17. Washington |
| 8. Virginia | 18. Nebraska |
| 9. SMU | 19. Clemson |
| 10. N.C. State | 20. Penn State |

nents last fall — Portland, SMU, Texas A&M and UCLA — and lost each. But the Huskers did it with a unit made up of no seniors, one junior, and the rest sophomores and freshmen.

The Huskers proved they could put points on the board last year behind scorers such as junior Kari Uppinghouse.

and finished with 20 points. Gay was the team's leading scorer with eight goals. She finished with 18 points.

In all, Nebraska returns six of its top seven point getters from a year ago. Jamie Riley, who collected 17 points, is the only non-returning starter from 1995.

Kari Uppinghouse, a transfer in 1994 from George Mason, fired 63 shots on goal in '95 and finished with seven goals and 17 points. That shot total equals teammate Erica De Vitis' total shot production. De Vitis finished with 13 points.

Along with the prolific scoring, comes some stingy returning defenders. Sophomore Heather Brown and junior Tanya Wright earned second- and third-team all-region honors last season.

Add to this the return of goalkeepers Michelle Denomme and red-shirt transfer Becky Hornbacher, and the Huskers could be painfully difficult to score against. Denomme tal-

lied 1,415 minutes in goal last year, while Hornbacher led the Virginia Cavaliers to a No. 10 rating in 1994 while allowing an ACC leading 0.80 goals against average.

Ratliff, the only senior on the unit,

University of Nebraska



will be a co-captain of the 1996 team. Tanya Franck, a junior middle fielder from Toronto, Ontario, who missed the entire 1995 season with an anterior cruciate ligament injury, will be the other captain.

Kristina Ritterbush, Stephanie

Junior Tanya Wright leads the way for Nebraska's stingy defensive unit.

Vacek, Sandy Smith, Katrena Bevins, Andi Bigham should also see more playing time, along with more scoring opportunities, in '96.

Other returning letter winners include junior defender Lynne Officer, and junior goalkeeper Michelle Hauser.

With success, comes people who want to be involved in that success. Nebraska signed Colorado High School Player of the Year Lindsay Eddleman, California Defensive Player of the Year Jenny Benson, and Canadian National Team starter Isabelle Morneau.

Walker also landed two-time All-California midfielder Jill Nelson, five-time British Columbia provincial all-star Sharolta Nonen, and first-team All-Nebraska player Jackie Erdkamp.

The season will pit Nebraska against tough ACC opponents North Carolina State and Duke on the road in early September. The Huskers then meet Vanderbilt, Texas and Texas A&M in home games. ■

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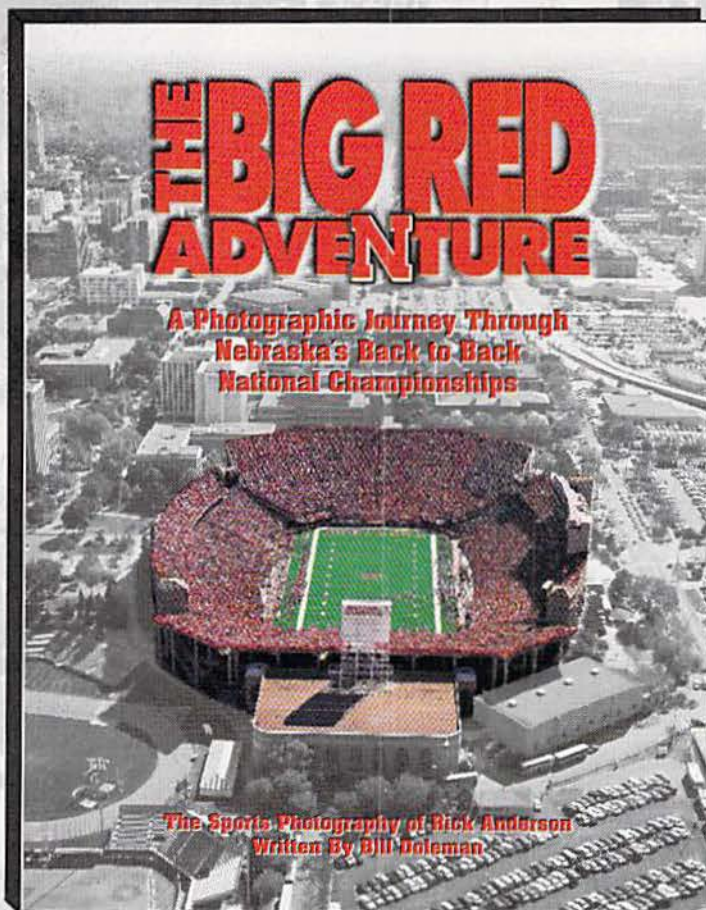
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~ Nancy Osborne



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Can Lisa Reitsma continue to dominate at an All-American level now that everyone knows the ball will be going her way more often?

Once. So why not twice? Terry Pettit used a golf metaphor to describe an effect of coaching the Nebraska volleyball team to the NCAA championship last season. For a week or so after his first hole-in-one, "whenever I hit a shot, I kept expecting it to go into the hole," he said. "Until you get one, you're not really convinced they exist. Afterward, you know they're out there. Then you can focus on finding them."

So it is with the NCAA volleyball championship.

As with scoring a hole-in-one, however, many factors involved in winning a national championship are beyond a coach's control. Preparation and ability can put a team in position. But there is often a fine line between success and failure at the highest levels of intercollegiate athletics.

Rarely is a team capable of dominating its opponents the way Tom Osborne's Cornhuskers did in winning their second consecutive national championship in football last season.

Pettit's goal for his team is a repeat title. He has built the program to the point that winning the NCAA championship is a perennial goal. But "last year, it was a reasonable goal," he said. Whether or not that again is the case remains to be seen. "Some things won't become clear until the preseason."

"I don't want to lower our expectations, or limit this team in any way. But in winning the championship last year, it wasn't like we found a route to India. We didn't find out anything we didn't know."

Pettit has three players with starting experience on whom he can depend, including junior Lisa Reitsma, an All-American outside hitter; senior Kate Crnich and sophomore Stacie Maser.

Crnich and Maser, a middle blocker last season, also are outside hitters.

Three key players are gone: Allison Weston, Christy Johnson and Billie Winsett. Weston was a two-

THE LO

time, first-team All-American and shared the American Volleyball Coaches Association Player of the Year award. Johnson, also a first-team All-American, was the setter — her career record as a starter was a remarkable 65-2. And Winsett "was maybe the best passer in college," Pettit said.

Going into last season, the Huskers had a combined 10 years of starting experience. This year, they have about three years. "We're physically talented. But there's no question we're less experienced than the last couple of seasons, particularly at setter," said Pettit, who's in his 20th season at Nebraska.

Fiona Nepo, a sophomore from Honolulu, Hawaii, will succeed Johnson as the Huskers' setter. The last sophomore to start at setter for Nebraska was Nikki Stricker five years ago, according to Pettit.

"Before that, it was probably Cathy Noth," he said. Both are Husker assistants.

The 5-foot-9 Nepo has the talent to succeed at the major college level.

"Fiona is mature as a person," said Pettit. "But that's different than being mature as a setter. She has set only one collegiate match, and she was probably more of a hitter than a setter when she came here."

"Young players are going to make great plays. The consistency just isn't there."

Scott Frost, the junior transfer from Stanford who is expected to

Minus Johnson and Weston, Pettit's 1996-97 team will have only about three years of starting experience and a sophomore setter in Fiona Nepo (right).



replace Tommie Frazier as the starting quarterback for the Nebraska football team this fall, is in a situation similar to that of Nepo, according to Pettit. "He's a great athlete, strong, bright. All the ingredients are there."

Now that Terry Pettit has found the promised land (national title), can his team get back minus its three biggest stars?



"But go back and look at where Tommie Frazier was three years ago ..."

The other senior besides Crnich is outside hitter Maria Hedbeck. Middle blocker Jen McFadden, who has been plagued by injuries the last two years after an outstanding freshman season, decided in August not to return to the team.

Sophomore Jamie Krondak could work her way into the starting lineup at outside hitter, with depth provided by some new faces, among them redshirted freshmen Denise Koziol and Lisa Avery, and sophomore Megan Korver, a transfer from George Washington University. The 6-foot-1 Korver was the Atlantic 10 Conference Newcomer of the Year last season. She is from Adams, Neb.

Korver and Avery are middle blockers. Koziol is an outside hitter. She came to the Huskers from Norfolk, Neb., High School as a walk-on but was awarded a scholarship after last season.

Tonia Tauke, a 6-foot-3 freshman middle blocker from Council Bluffs, Iowa, might have an opportunity to contribute immediately as a backup, Pettit said. But the key to success will be held by players who have been in the program — Reitsma the returning All-American, for example.

"It will be interesting without Weston and Winsett, and (having) a new setter ... everybody who plays us will focus on her (Reitsma) now," Pettit said. "That will be the real challenge for Lisa. Can she continue playing at an All-America level when everyone knows the ball is going to go to her?"

Reitsma, who was at her best in the biggest matches last season, apparently hasn't lost her focus. Last spring, "I asked: 'What's your intention this year?' It was a real question for me," said Pettit. "But without (hesitating) a millionth of a second, she said: 'To win another national championship.'"

Reitsma punctuated her response with a look that seemed to say: Why would you even ask? She and the others who were on last year's team know winning the NCAA Tournament is possible. ■

LONG ROAD BACK

BEST OF THE BEST

the numbers game

Editor's Note — This is the first of an 11-part series featuring our picks as the best players ever at each jersey number in the modern era. Next week we'll break down numbers 1 through 10.

What's in a number? Maybe more than you would think. Ahman Green wears jersey No. 30, which is appropriate given his potential.

Mike Rozier, the second of Nebraska's two Heisman Trophy winners, also wore No. 30.

It doesn't take much imagination to see Green as the next Rozier, after watching the sophomore I-back from Omaha Central rush for 1,086 yards and score 16 touchdowns in his first collegiate season. Those were Rozier-like numbers, as was Green's 7.7 yards-per-carry average.

As a result, one might conclude that it was no coincidence Green wore No. 30, that he asked to wear it, perhaps in tribute to his famous predecessor. Such a conclusion would be wrong, however.

In fact, the opposite is true. Green would have preferred No. 34, which he wore in high school. The problem was, No. 34 had been assigned to Vershan Jackson, a sophomore tight end, and Ramone Worthy, a sophomore linebacker. Because one played offense and the other defense, they could have duplicate numbers. Worthy has since quit the team, leaving Jackson with the only No. 34 jersey.

Even though numbers in the 80s are more common among tight ends, Jackson, who began his Cornhusker

career as a fullback, had established his identity in No. 34. Because Green also played offense, they couldn't share the number. And as a veteran, the choice of jerseys was Jackson's.

Glen Abbott, who is preparing for



Can you name the three players who have won All-America honors while wearing No. 12?

his 20th season as Nebraska's equipment manager, gave Green jersey No. 30 because it was the closest number to 34 available. Sophomore

James Sims had No. 31. Redshirted freshman David Reddick had No. 32. Senior Clester Johnson had No. 33. Junior Mike Smith had No. 35. Redshirted freshman Billy Legate had No. 36. Senior Darren Schmadeke had No. 37. And senior Chris Norris had No. 38. All but Schmadeke played offense. And there was no reason to duplicate Schmadeke's No. 37 since it wasn't the exact number Green wanted, anyway. So he got No. 30.

Green could have No. 34 after Jackson completes his eligibility two seasons from now. By then, however, Green would be a senior, and "I don't think he would want it," said Abbott.

The assigning of jersey numbers is hardly haphazard. And the process is particularly complicated at Nebraska, where more than 100 players regularly suit up for games at Memorial Stadium.

NCAA rules allow players to wear numbers 1 through 99, with five interior offensive linemen wearing numbers from 50 through 79. The restriction on offensive linemen has been mandatory since 1966. Prior to that, a system of numbering players according to position was simply encouraged.

Warren Alfson and Forrest Behm, All-America offensive linemen on the Nebraska team that played in the 1941 Rose Bowl, wore No. 22 and No. 33, respectively. Lawrence Ely, an All-America center in 1932, wore No. 37. Fred Shirey, an All-America tackle in 1937 wore No. 45.

In 1947, the NCAA recommended that ends wear numbers in the 80s, tackles in the 70s, guards in the 60s, centers in the 50s and backs in the teens, 20s, 30s and 40s. The system, based on offensive positions (numbers didn't matter much on defense), became even more specific, with quarterbacks wearing numbers 10 to 19, right halfbacks 20 to 29, fullbacks 30 to 39 and left halfbacks 40-49.

It wasn't until 1937 that the NCAA required jersey numbers. Before then, numbers were optional, though they had been officially recommended by the NCAA in 1915 and had been used as early as 1908. The first college football team with numbers on its jerseys was Washington & Jefferson's.

The NCAA not only made jersey numbers mandatory, it also established requirements for the numbers. They had to be Arabic (no Roman numerals). They had to be worn on

the front and back of jerseys. And they had to be a minimum height of 6 inches on the front and 8 to 10 inches on the back.

Nebraska football players have worn jersey numbers since the late 1920s. The numbers of early All-Americans Dan McMullen and Ray Richards are included in the Cornhusker media guide. McMullen, a guard, wore No. 66 in 1928. Richards, a tackle, wore No. 47 in 1929.

The guide notes that numbers aren't available for Nebraska's first three football All-Americans: Vic Halligan in 1914, Guy Chamberlin in 1915 and Ed Weir in 1924-25. That's because they didn't wear numbers on their jerseys.

Players haven't always kept numbers from one season to the next. Former Cornhusker All-American Tom Novak wore three different jersey numbers during his distinguished four-year career. He wore No. 68 in 1946 and 1947. He traded that for No. 61 in 1948. And then he wore No. 60 in 1949.

After Novak finished at Nebraska, the "N" Club retired his No. 60 jersey. There will never be another No. 60 playing for the Cornhuskers. Until 1994, five other numbers had been retired, but by the Nebraska football team rather than by the letterman's club: 20, 30, 50, 71 and 79. They were last worn by Rozier, Dave Rimington (50), Dean Steinkuhler (71) and Rich Glover (79). The last to wear No. 20 was Terry Rodgers, who did so at the request of his father, Johnny — in whose honor it was retired.

There seems to be a fascination with jersey numbers, among fans as well as players. Numbers are an essential part of a player's identity, particularly in football, where helmets lend anonymity to players during games. There is less familiarity than in basketball or even baseball.

Nebraska fans can tell you that Trev Alberts wore the No. 34 that Green wanted and probably that Will Shields wore No. 75, though offensive linemen don't always draw attention commensurate with their contributions. Shields won the Outland Trophy in 1992. Larry Jacobson, who won the Outland in 1971, also wore No. 75. Offensive tackle Chris Dishman, a candidate for All-America honors this season, wears No. 75 now. That's

one of several numbers with an impressive history at Nebraska.

Three Cornhuskers who have earned All-America recognition have worn No. 12. Can you name them?

If you included Turner Gill on the list, at least one guess is wrong. Gill, who now coaches Nebraska's quarterbacks, certainly was worthy of All-America honors. But no one acknowledged it. However, he was a three-time, first-team All-Big Eight selection.

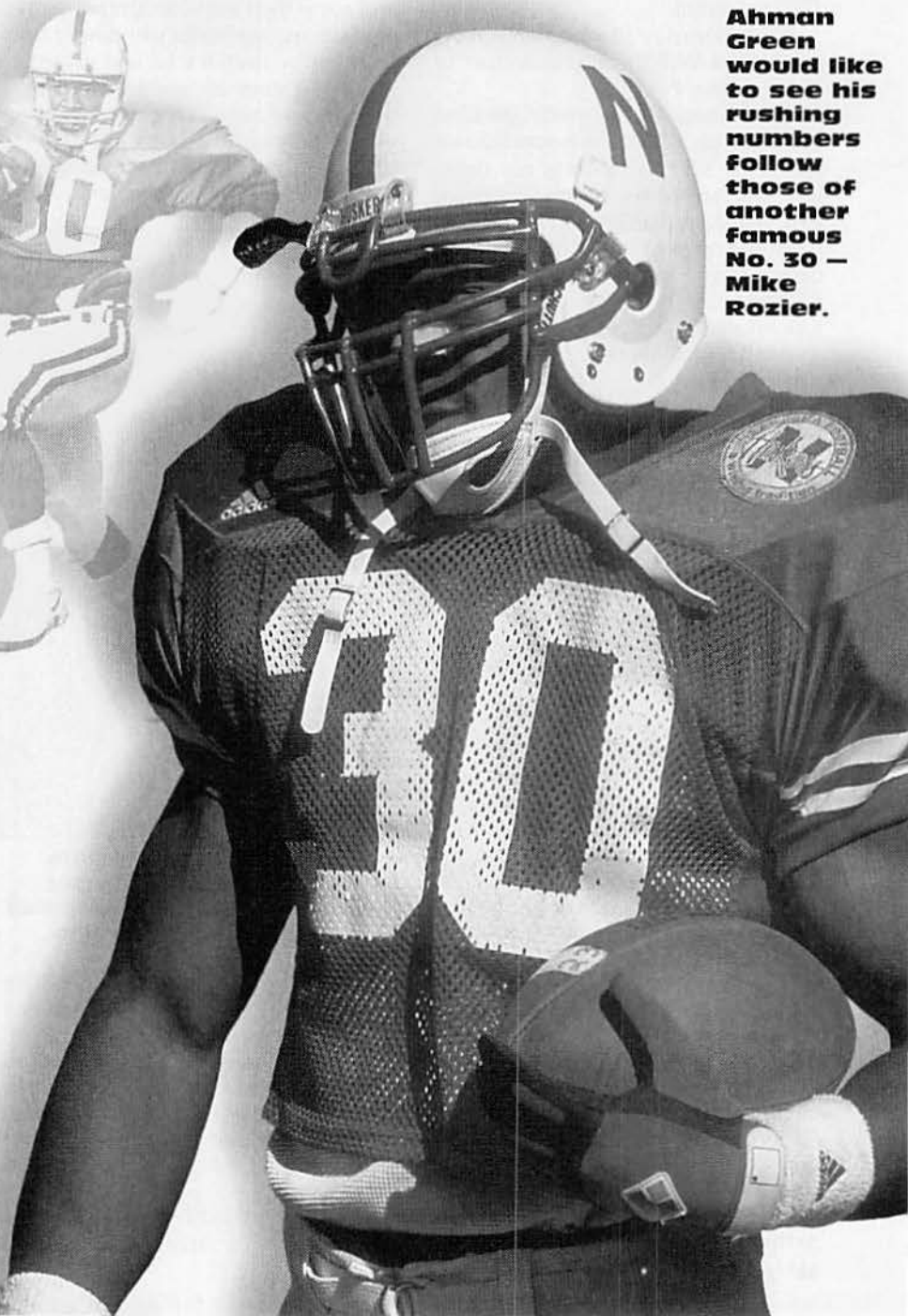
While you're trying to come up with three No. 12 All-Americans, can you recall (no looking it up) who will wear No. 12 this season? His first name is Mike...

Three Nebraska All-Americans

have worn No. 66, including one who was mentioned earlier in this story. Three have worn No. 72. Any ideas? Another All-American besides Shields and Jacobson wore No. 75. Do you remember who that offensive tackle was? And how about No. 96? Two All-America defensive ends and one undersized All-America defensive tackle wore that number at Nebraska.

Because of this number fascination, each issue of *Huskers Illustrated* during the 1996 season will feature the best players who wore every number from 1 to 99. The first in the series will deal with 1 to 10. Get your own choices ready. And see if you can answer the questions just posed. ■

Ahman Green would like to see his rushing numbers follow those of another famous No. 30 — Mike Rozier.



The Last Hope?

The structure of college football has changed to the extent that Nebraska could be the last program with a chance of surpassing Oklahoma's 47-game winning streak

By MIKE BABCOCK

The headline for *Sports Illustrated's* cover story the week of Nov. 16, 1957, was: "Why Oklahoma Is Unbeatable." The reference was to the Sooners' 47-game, football winning streak.

That Saturday in Norman, Okla., coach Bud Wilkinson's team lost to Notre Dame, 7-0.

The lessons of the game, decided by a 3-yard, Dick Lynch touchdown run with 3:50 remaining, are timeless. Beware of the *Sports Illustrated* jinx. And, more importantly perhaps, never overlook an opponent — particularly the Fighting Irish, who were three-touchdown underdogs.

Although Notre Dame opened the 1957 season with four consecutive victories, it had suffered back-to-back losses to Navy (20-6) and Michigan State (34-6) and dropped from the *Associated Press* Top 20 rankings. Oklahoma was No. 2 in the AP poll, after extending its NCAA-record winning streak, which had begun with a 19-14 victory against Texas in the third week of the 1953 season, by seven.

Ironically, and appropriately given the historical symmetry, Notre Dame had been the last team to defeat the Sooners, winning 28-21 at Norman to open the 1953 season. Oklahoma then played a 7-7 tie the next week at Pittsburgh before beginning its five-season journey into the record book.

The Sooners also had scored in what was then an NCAA-record 123 consecutive games.

After the loss, Wilkinson told reporters that winning streaks of such length were a thing of the past. "There are no more super teams that can go 10 Saturdays a season and win. With material more equally distributed, any team will be capable of getting up for the one big game it's

after," he said.

The truth of Wilkinson's words has not diminished in 40 years. If anything, it has increased. Teams now must go 11 or even 12 Saturdays (with an occasional Thursday night mixed in) a season and win, then survive a bowl game against an opponent of comparable ability to be undefeated and untied.

Bowl games are a significant factor in winning streaks. "When you're playing in a bowl, it's a 50-50 proposition," former Cornhusker coach Bob Devaney once said. And

11-0 in 1955 and 10-0 in 1956, and it was proclaimed national champion by the *Associated Press* twice, in 1955 and 1956.

The 1954 Sooners finished third, behind national champion Ohio State and UCLA.

The longest major college winning streak since Oklahoma's has been 35 by the University of Toledo from 1969 to 1971. The longest in the last quarter of a century has been 29 by Miami from 1990 to 1993. The Hurricanes' ended rather unceremoniously, 34-13 to Alabama in the Sugar Bowl game.

In that historical context, Nebraska will begin its pursuit of an unprecedented third consecutive national championship this season. And if the Cornhuskers were to be successful in that, they almost certainly would move within striking distance of Oklahoma's seemingly untouchable record.

They have won 25 in a row. With another perfect season, they would have 38 consecutive victories and the third-longest streak in NCAA history. Washington won 39 games from 1908 to 1914.

Nebraska could win another national championship without going undefeated and untied, of course. Conversely, the Cornhuskers could go 13-0 and not be named national champions — Penn State's Joe Paterno could elaborate on that. More than likely, however, the two would go hand-in-hand.

A couple of years ago, Wilkinson, who is now deceased, told a reporter that even though "conditions" weren't favorable, Oklahoma's record for consecutive victories might be broken. "Every record I've ever known to exist has been broken," he said. "So I assume that one will be, too."

Then again, maybe not. The structure of major college football has



Bud Wilkinson, who once thought the era of "super teams" was over, amended that thought a few years ago. that remains true.

Oklahoma's 47-game winning streak included only two bowl games because the Big Seven Conference prohibited its champion from playing in back-to-back bowls. Nebraska represented the conference in the 1955 Orange Bowl as a result of the prohibition, despite losing to the Sooners 55-7.

Oklahoma had three perfect seasons during the streak: 10-0 in 1954,

changed to such an extent in the past two years that Nebraska very well could be the last program with a chance at surpassing it.

Even though scholarship limits and more stringent academic requirements may create a greater disparity between the best and worst programs (instead of leveling the field, as some expected), a lesser team still has enough talent to win what Wilkinson called "the one big game it's after."

More significantly, however, is the creation of super conferences such as the Big 12 and the passion, enhanced considerably by television money, for a national championship bowl game. A team that survives the regular season undefeated and untied still must win a bowl game to achieve perfection.

With the Bowl Alliance matching its best, one team that has survived the regular season (and perhaps a conference playoff game) undefeated and untied is likely to be matched against another of comparable strength — as was the case, ostensibly, in the 1996 Fiesta Bowl game. And when the Rose Bowl joins the Alliance in 1998 the best in the Big 10

and Pac-10 will be included in the mix.

As indicated earlier, Oklahoma played bowl games after only two of the four seasons leading up to 1957 and the winning streak's end. Plus, the Sooners played 10-game regular-season schedules, with six games in a conference that did not enjoy the national prominence the Big Eight has had.

In addition, schedules didn't begin until the last week in September, a factor that might be overlooked when considering the potential for a team to go undefeated and untied. The sheer length of a season now can compound the effects of the two or three additional games teams play. This season, for example, will begin in late August for some teams, and early September for the rest. If nothing else, there is the risk of burnout for players and coaches who are busy with not only the five-month seasons but also off-season conditioning programs and spring practices made more intense by NCAA limitations on length.

Those who would analyze Nebraska's chances of winning a third national championship, and

extending its winning streak to 38 in the process, should remember to factor in the element of luck.

The Oklahoma teams that won 47 straight "were never overconfident about any opponent, at any time," Wilkinson once said. "Coupled with that, they were at their best every time."

Treating every opponent with equal attention has been a characteristic of Tom Osborne's teams, even before the current 25-game winning streak. That shouldn't be a problem. Nebraska won't lose this season for lack of preparation. Osborne will do what he can to ensure the Cornhuskers are at their best.

Notre Dame isn't on the schedule, so that's a positive if history is any indication.

As for the *Sports Illustrated* jinx, however . . . well, that's a factor beyond Nebraska's control.

As two-time defending national champions, Nebraska is almost certain to be featured on the magazine's cover at some point during the season. Still, NU fans should take heart. If recent history is any indication, the headline isn't likely to say: "Why Nebraska Is Unbeatable." ■

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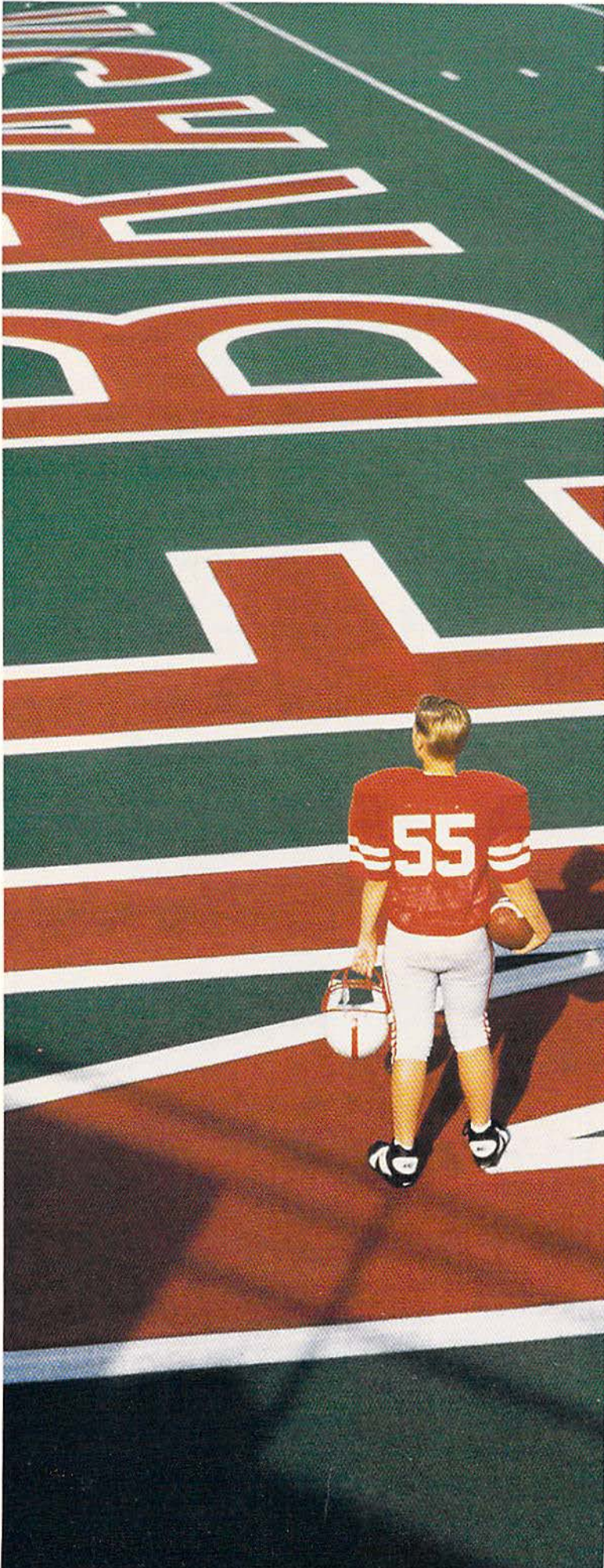


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